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ITALIAN
TRAVEL SKETCHES, &c.



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ITALIAN TRAVEL SKETCHES, &C.,
BY HEINRICH HEINE. TRANS-
LATED BY ELIZABETH A. SHARP.

From the Original
With Prefatory Note from the French of
Théophile Gautier.

London: Walter Scott, Ltd.,
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NOTE.

IT has been thought advisable to omit from this volume the second part of the *Italienische Reisebilder*; and, as of more general interest, to add the hitherto untranslated *The French Stage: Confidential Letters addressed to M. August Lewald*.

PREFATORY STUDY ON HEINRICH HEINE.

BY THEÓPHILE GAUTIER.

THE last time that I saw Heinrich Heine was a few weeks before his death; I had to write a short notice for the re-issue of his works. He lay on the bed where, according to the doctors, a slight indisposition first held him, but whence he had not been able to rise therefrom for eight years. One was always sure of finding him, as he himself used to say; yet, little by little, solitude encompassed him more and more; hence his exclamation to Berlioz, on the occasion of an unexpected visit: "You come to see me! you are as original as ever!"

It was not that he was less loved or less admired, but life entices away with it the most faithful hearts, in spite of themselves: only a mother or a wife would never abandon so persistent a death-agony. Human eyes cannot, without turning aside, contemplate the sight of suffering for too long a time. Goddesses themselves grow weary of it, and the three thousand Oceanides who went to console Prometheus on his Caucasian cross returned therefrom in the evening.

When my sight had accustomed itself to the penumbra which surrounded him, for a very bright daylight would

have hurt his almost faded sight, I perceived and sat down in an arm-chair by the side of his bedridden couch. The poet, with obvious effort, stretched to me a soft little hand, thin, nerveless, and white as a wafer, the hand of an invalid, sheltered from the influence of the open air, that has touched nothing, not even a pen, for years; never were the hardest ossicles of death gloved with a skin more suave, more unctuous, more satin-like, more polished. Fever, in default of life, infused some warmth into it, yet at his touch I experienced a slight shiver as though I had come in contact with the hand of a being who no longer pertained to earth.

With his other hand, in order to see me, he had raised the paralysed lid of the eye which still afforded him a confused perception of objects and enabled him to discern a ray of sunlight as through black gauze. After a few exchanged sentences, when he knew the motive of my coming, he said to me, "Do not pity me too much; the vignette of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in which I am represented emaciated and with hanging head like a Christ of Morales, has already moved the sensibilities of good people too much in my favour. I do not like portraits that are too faithful; I want to be beautified, as pretty women are painted. You knew me when I was young and flourishing; substitute my old self for this piteous effigy."

In truth, the Heinrich Heine to whom I had been presented in 183-, a short time after his arrival in Paris, in no wise resembled him who now was stretched before my eyes, moveless as a corpse which awaits its consignment to the coffin.

He was a fine man of thirty-five or thirty-six years,

with every appearance of robust health ; one would have said a German Apollo, to see his high white forehead, pure as a marble table, which was shadowed with great masses of brown hair. His blue eyes sparkled with light and inspiration ; his round full cheeks, graceful in contour, were not of the tottering romantic lividness so fashionable at that date. On the contrary, ruddy roses bloomed classically on them ; a slight Hebraic curve interfered, without altering its purity, with the intention which his nose had had of being Greek ; his harmonious lips, "paired like two fine rhymes," to use one of his phrases, had a charming expression when in repose ; but when he spoke their red bow shot out sharp and barbed arrows, sarcastic darts which never failed in their aim ; for no one was ever more cruel to stupidity. To the divine smile of Apollo succeeded the leer of the satyr.

A slight pagan *embonpoint*, which was expiated later on by a truly Christian emaciation, rounded the lines of his form ; he wore neither beard, nor moustache, nor whiskers ; he did not smoke nor drink beer, and, like Goethe, even had a horror of these things. He was then in the midst of his Hegelian ardour. If it was repugnant to him to believe that God makes himself man, he had no difficulty in admitting that man had made himself god ; and he conducted himself accordingly. Let him speak himself concerning this splendid intellectual intoxication : "I myself was the living law of morals, I was impeccable, I was purity incarnate ; the most compromised of Magdalens were purified by the flames of my ardour, and became virgins in my arms : these restorations to virginity went well-nigh at times, it is true, towards exhausting

my holy strength. I was all love, and wholly exempt from hatred. I no longer revenged myself on my enemies; for I recognised no enemies *vis-à-vis* to my divine person, but only miscreants; the wrong they did me was sacrilege, as the injuries they said of me were so many blasphemies. From time to time it was necessary to punish such impieties, but it was a divine chastisement which struck the sinner, not the vengeance of human rancour. Neither did I, as regards myself, acknowledge any friends, but many faithful believers, and I did them much good. The expenses of being a god, who cannot be niggardly and who controls neither his purse nor his body, are enormous. In order to fulfil this splendid profession, he must above all things be dowered with much money and much health; now, one fine morning—it was the end of the month of February 1848—these two things failed me, and my divinity was so shaken that it fell miserably to pieces.”

I saw much of Heine during this divine period. He was a charming god, malicious as a devil, and a good fellow, whatever may have been said about him. Whether he regarded me as a friend or a believer mattered not to me, provided I was able to enjoy his brilliant conversation; for, if he was prodigal with his money and his health, he was still more so with his wit. Although he knew French very well, he amused himself sometimes by disguising his sarcasms with a strong Teutonic pronunciation, which, in order to be reproduced, would need the strange onomatopœia with which Balzac, in his *Comédie Humaine*, imitates the uncouth phrases of Baron du Nucinger. The comic effect was then

irresistible; it was that of Aristophanes in the guise of Eulenspiegel.

A sort of joyous strength mingled with his lyricism; and if the light of the German moon silvered the one side of his physiognomy, the gay sun of France gilded the other. No other writer has had, at the same time, so much poetry and so much wit, two things which usually destroy one another; and as to that nervous sensibility which is the charm of *L'Intermezzo*, of *Tambour Legrand*, of *The Baths of Lucca*, and of so many other pages of the *Reisebilder*, he hid it in ordinary life with an exquisite modesty, and stopped with a *bon-mot* the tear which would otherwise have fallen.

His dress, though with no pretension to dandyism, was more cared for than is usual with literary men, with whom a certain negligence spoils the fastidious grace of luxury. The various apartments which he inhabited had little of what is to-day called the artistic *cachet*—that is to say, they were not encumbered with carved cupboards, paintings, statuettes, and other *bric-à-brac* curiosities, but, on the contrary, denoted simply a comfortable bourgeois abode, and the inmate's obvious intention of avoiding eccentricity. A beautiful portrait of a woman by Laëmlin, representing the Juliet of whom the poet speaks in the opening of *Atta-Troll*, is the only work of art that I remember to have seen there.

In order to re-establish his tottering divinity, Heine went for the bathing season to Cauterets. There he composed that strange poem in which a wolf is the hero, and wherein the most grotesque humour mingles with the most ideal poetry. Then I lost sight of him for some time.

One morning I was told that a stranger, whose name,

distorted in the mouth of the servant, I could not recognise, asked to see me. I went downstairs to the room in which I received strangers, and I saw a very thin man, whose face recalled that of Géricault, and terminated with a tawny pointed beard, already threaded through with silver. I searched my memory as to the identity of this matutinal guest who saluted me by my first name and held out his hand with the frank cordiality of an old friend. After a few minutes' conversation, at a flash of wit from the unknown, I exclaimed to myself, "It is the devil or it is Heine." It was indeed Heine; the god had become man.

A few months later Heinrich Heine took to his bed never to leave it again: for eight years he remained there nailed to the cross of paralysis by the nails of suffering. During that long death-agony he presented the phenomenon of soul living without body, of spirit dispensing with matter. Illness had attenuated, emaciated, dissected him at will, and with the unwearied patience of an artist of the Middle Ages; from the statue of a Greek god it had shaped a Christ gaunt as a skeleton, in which the nerves, the tendons, and the veins were revealed. Thus ravaged, he was still beautiful. When he raised his heavy eyelid a flash shot from his half-blinded pupil; genius resuscitated this dead face; Lazarus came forth from his grave for a few minutes. This spectre, which, in its shroud, seemed like a melancholy recumbent effigy on a monument, found a voice to talk, to laugh, to shoot witty ironies, to dictate charming pages, to give flight to winged strophes, and, on the days when the stone of his tomb crushed him most painfully, to wail lamentations as mournful as those

of Job on his dust-heap. His friends should rejoice that this atrocious torture is at last ended, and that the invisible executioner has given the *coup-de-grâce* to the poor criminal: but the thought that of that luminous brain, full of rays and of ideas whence images buzzed forth like golden bees, nought remains but a little grey pulp, is a sorrow which cannot be accepted without revolt. It is true he was nailed alive to his bier; but on bending an ear the song of poetry could be heard below the black pall. How woful it is to see one of those microcosms, vaster than the universe and contained in the narrow vault of a skull, crushed, lost, annihilated! What slow combinations nature must have needed to produce such a head!

Heinrich Heine was born on the 1st of January in the year 1801, which made him say laughingly that he was the first man of his century. Topffer remarks upon the inconvenience, as a man grows old, of bearing the date of his century, which warns him perpetually of his age, and seems to draw him with it. Heine took leave of his companion at the fifty-sixth milestone.

The weather was cold, grey, and foggy; the hour specified for the funeral was in the morning. A few old friends and admirers walked up and down before the mortuary house, awaiting the start to the cemetery. The poet had forbidden all pomp, all ceremony; he had considered himself as long since dead, and he desired that the little that remained of him should be carried silently from that chamber which he would quit only for the tomb. The sight of the coffin, very large, very long, in which the thin body lay, brought involuntarily to our minds this passage of the *Intermezzo*: "Go and fetch

me a bier of solid, thick planks ; it must be longer than the bridge of Mayence ; and bring me twelve giants stronger even than the vigorous Saint Christopher of the Cathedral of Cologne, on the Rhine ; they are to carry away the coffin and cast it into the sea ; so large a coffin needs as large a grave. Do you know why this coffin must be so big and so heavy ? I shall place therein at one time my love and my sufferings."

Thus the bier was not too large ; and if it was not cast into the sea, it was lowered into a provisional vault in the presence of poets and artists, French and German, few in number, who stood there in respectful attitudes, knowing that they were assisting at the funeral of a king of mind, although there was neither a long procession, nor lugubrious music, nor muffled drums, nor black cloth starred with orders, nor emphatic discourse, nor tripods crowned with green flames. The stone closed, each mourner redescended the sad hill, and was lost in the immense swarm of human life.

Few poets have moved and disturbed us as Heine has done. We do not know German, it is true, and have been able to admire him only by means of translation ; but what a man he must be who, denuded of rhythm, of rhyme, of the happy arrangement of words, of all, in short, which constitutes style, produces nevertheless such magical effects ! Heine is the greatest lyricist of Germany, and takes his place naturally by the side of Goethe and Schiller ; so he appears to us, notwithstanding that poetry turned into prose be but stuffed moonlight, as he himself said.

Never was a nature composed of more diverse elements than that of Heinrich Heine. He was at once

joyous and sad, sceptical and credulous, tender and cruel, sentimental and mocking, classic and romantic, German and French, refined and cynical, enthusiastic and yet cool-headed ; everything except dull. To the purest Greek form he added the most exquisite modern sense ; he was, in truth, Euphorion, the child of Faust and of the beautiful Helen.

This is not the place to estimate the value of his work, which will speak for itself, but we can at least tender a general impression thereof. When you open a volume of Heine's, you seem to enter one of those gardens which he loved to describe ; the marble sphinxes of the staircase sharpen their claws on the angle of the pedestals, and look at you out of their white eyes with disquieting intensity ; shudders pass over their leonine croup, their woman's throats palpitate as though a heart beat beneath the rigid contours. Doors tremble in turning on their rusty hinges, and you fancy you see the fold of a robe disappearing beneath the archway, as though the soul of solitude took flight, surprised by your approach. Mosses, thistles, and burdocks have sprung up between the disjointed stones of the terrace ; tangled hedges intercept your way with their branches and implore you not to penetrate further. Roses seem to bleed among the briars, and the drops of rain trembling on their petals glisten like tears : flowers, choked by ill weeds, have strange scents which asphyxiate and give vertigo.

In the basin of the fountain the black water stagnates underneath the green lentils, and the truncated naiad is as flat-nosed as the pale mask of death. The toad hops across the path and goes to relate your advent to its aunt, the viper. Nevertheless, the wind sighs its elegies,

and the nightingale sings its plaints of lost love ; at the window of the dilapidated manor appears a young girl, fair-haired and fresh, in a clinging robe of satin, like those pretty Netherlandese which Gaspard Nestcher loves to paint in a frame of stone or of young vine. She is charming, but she has no heart, only a little glacier congealed in her bosom. She would never do you a wrong ; but, if you have any soul or nerves, far better that you should be enamoured of one of those women who bear vice painted with rouge on their faces, than of her. She will cause you to die by a thousand innocently diabolical tortures, and on the day of judgment you would wish not to be resuscitated for fear of seeing her again !

Heine has this in common with Goethe, that he paints real women,—one touch suffices him to draw a living, complete figure. What deceptive charm, what perfidious languor, what hyena laughter, what crocodile tears, what burning coldness, what icy ardour, what feline coquetry ! Never has poet twitched better the dragon's tail at the corner of a rosy lip ; and with what conviction he says of Lusignan, the lover of Mélusine : “ Happy the man whose mistress was only half serpent ! ”

If Heine has sculptured the most dazzling statues of Greek gods in marble, and bas-reliefs of bacchanals as pure in form as the antique, he is at least the equal of Uhland and of Tieck when he narrates the catholic and chivalric legends of the Middle Ages. He blows a blast from the marvellous horn of Achim d'Arnim and of Brentano, which makes the deer tremble in the depths of the forests, and causes the drawbridges of feudal manors to be lowered. When he plunges for-

ward on his charger in the hunt, his boot soon touches all lightly in passing the armorially decorated robe of the *châtelaine*, and no one handles the boar spear with better grace than he.

Our literary manners, much softened, may cause some of Heinrich Heine's executions to appear very cruel ; he is pitiless to bad poets ; but had not Apollo the right to flay Marsyas ? The hand which holds the golden lyre holds also the knife with which to dissect the coarse satyr.—Let me finish with this page from the Book of Lazarus ; it will give an idea of the poet's manner, who now knows the answer to this terrible question :

“The poor soul says to the body: ‘I will not leave thee, I will remain with thee ; with thee I will sink into night and death, with thee drink nothingness. Thou hast always been my second self, thou hast enveloped me lovingly, like a vestment of satin lined with ermine ; alas ! all naked, and despoiled of my dear body, a purely abstract being, I now must go and wander about up there like a happy nonentity, in the kingdom of light, in those cold spaces of heaven wherein silent eternities will gaze gapingly at me ; they drag themselves along, full of weariness, and make a feeble clamping with their slippers of lead ! Oh ! it is horrible ! Oh ! stay with me, my well-beloved body !’

“The body says to the poor soul : ‘Oh, comfort thyself, distress not thyself thus. We must endure in silence the fate decreed for us by destiny. I was the wick of the lamp, it needs must be that I consume myself : thou, spirit, thou shalt be chosen to shine up there, a pretty little star, of purest clarity. I, myself, am but a rag. I am only matter : vain spark, I must vanish, and become

again that which I was—a few cinders. Therefore adieu, comfort thyself. Perhaps, after all, it is much more amusing than thou thinkest. If thou shouldst meet there the Great Bear in the vault of the planets, salute him a thousand times from me.’”

9 TRAVEL SKETCHES.

TRAVEL SKETCHES.



JOURNEY FROM MUNICH TO GENOA.

CHAPTER I.

I AM the politest man in the world. I flatter myself that I have never been rude on this earth, where there are so many intolerable bores, who buttonhole a listener, pour out their grievances to him, or declaim their verses. I have always, with truly Christian patience, leant a hearing ear to such miseries; and I have never, by even the slightest contortion, betrayed the deep dejection of my soul. As a penitent Brahmin resigns his body to be the prey of vermin, whereby even these meanest of God's creatures may be satiated, so have I often given the whole day's length to these deadliest of human insects; I have listened tranquilly, and my inward sighs have been audible to Him alone who is the rewarder of Virtue.

Besides, worldly wisdom advises us to be civil, and not to remain in sullen silence, nor to give an ungracious reply, when by chance a sponging commercial traveller or a dry cheese-merchant tacks himself on to us, and

begins a general European conversation with these words, "It is lovely weather to-day." One never knows whether one may not again fall in with a Philistine of this sort, and he may make us pay dearly for not having politely answered, "It is lovely weather to-day." It may even chance; dear reader, that you seat yourself at Cassel at the *table d'hôte* near to, indeed at the left-hand side of the aforesaid Philistine, and that he have a dish of brown carp before him, which he serves. Should he have an old bone to pick with you, the plate will make the round of the table, and not even the smallest portion of the tail will reach you. For, alas! you are the thirteenth at table, always a disquieting fact when you are seated at the carver's left side, and the plate is passed from his right. And to have no carp is a great misfortune; perhaps the greatest after the loss of the national cockade. The Philistine, who has served you this trick, adds insult to injury by offering you the bay leaves that remain lying in the brown sauce. Alas, of what use are bay leaves when there is no carp with them! and the Philistine winks his eye, chuckles, and mutters, "It is lovely weather to-day."

Alas! poor soul, it may even happen that you lie in a graveyard by the side of that Philistine, and at the Day of Judgment you hear the blast of the trumpet, and say to your neighbour, "Good friend, stretch out your hand to me, I pray you, so that I may stand up, for my left leg has gone to sleep with having lain in one position for so confoundedly long a time." Then suddenly you recognise the well-known Philistine chuckle, and hear his mocking voice, "It is lovely weather to-day."

CHAPTER II.

“LOVELY weather to-day——”

Had you, dear reader, heard the tone, the irreproachable bass falsetto in which these words were spoken, had you ever seen the speaker himself, the arch prosaic widow's-box-face, the sly, stupid little eyes, the cunning, investigating turned-up nose, you would at once have recognised that this flower had bloomed in no ordinary mould, that these accents were the Charlottenburg dialect, where the Berlinesse tongue is better spoken than in Berlin itself.

I am the politest man in the world, and I eat brown carp with great relish, and I believe sometimes in the Resurrection, and I answered, “It is indeed a lovely day.”

When the son of the Spree had accosted me in this manner, he set upon me briskly, and I could not rid myself of his questions and his anticipatory answers, and, in particular, from his parallelisms between Berlin and Munich, the New Athens, on whose head, so to say, he did not leave a single hair. I, however, took the New Athens under my special protection, for I always feel pledged to praise the place in which I am staying.

That on this occasion the disadvantage was with Berlin, dear reader, you will readily pardon, when I explain to you behind my hand that such a proceeding is merely a matter of policy ; for I know that were I to begin to praise my good Berlinesse, my fame among them would from that moment be at an end, they would shrug their shoulders and whisper to one another,

"That man grows light-minded, he actually praises us." No town has less local patriotism. A thousand miserable scribblers have eulogised it in prose and verse, yet no cock has crowed thereover in Berlin, not a single hen has been cooked in their honour, and under the Lindens they have been looked upon as just the same miserable poets as before. Indeed, if any poetaster shoots off skits at Berlin, equally little notice is taken of them. But should any one venture to launch shafts against Polkwitz, Innsbruck, Schilda, Posen, Krähwinkel, or any other chief town, the respective patriotisms would then rain down upon him ! The reason is this : Berlin is no small town ; but Berlin is just the place where a crowd of men, and among them, naturally, many men of intellect, gather together, to whom mere locality is a matter of indifference. These constitute intellectual Berlin. The traveller who passes through it, merely sees the long stretching rows of uniform houses, the long broad streets, which for the most part are built from the designs of one person, and are no indication of the ways or thought of the people. It is possible for the Sunday children only, to surmise somewhat of the private feelings of the inhabitants when they watch these long rows of houses, which, like the people themselves, strive to hold themselves aloof from one another, frigid with reciprocal antipathy. Only once, on a moonlight night, when I was returning late from Lutter and Wegener, I saw how that rigid disposition had given way to a mild melancholy ; how the houses, which stood so inimically opposite to one another, deigned to gaze at each other with a decaying Christian expression, and longed to throw themselves reconciled into each other's arms ; so that I,

poor man, who walked in the middle of the street, feared that I should be squashed. Many will find this fear laughable, and I also laughed over it when, with more sober gaze, I wandered through those very streets the other morning and once more saw the houses gaping so prosaically at one another.

Several flasks of poetry are absolutely necessary if, in Berlin, one wishes to see anything else than dead houses and Berlineses. It is difficult to see spirits here. The town contains so few antiquities—it is so new; and yet this newness is already old, so faded and decayed. For, as has been said, the greater part of it grew out of the minds of individuals, and not of the masses. The great Fritz stands foremost in this minority; what he found was merely the sub-stratum. The town received its distinctive character first from him; and had nothing more been built since his death, it would have remained the historical memorial of the mind of that prosaic, wonder-working hero, whose refined tastelessness and growing intellectual freedom—the shallowness and virtue of his time—have found a genuinely German expression in this town.

Potsdam, for example, strikes us as a similar memorial. We wander through its deserted streets as we do through the bequeathed philosophical writings of the philosopher of Sans-Souci; it belongs to these *œuvres posthumes*, and although it is now only stone waste-paper, and contains much that is laughable, nevertheless we examine it with serious interest, and here and there suppress a growing desire to laugh, as if we feared we should receive a sudden blow on the back from old Fritz's Spanish pipe. Such an apprehension never seizes one in Berlin; we

feel there that old Fritz and his Spanish pipe have no longer any power, for, otherwise, so many sick obscurantist faces would not stare out of the old enlightened windows, nor so many stupid superstitious buildings have ensconced themselves under the old sceptical philosophical houses. I will not be misunderstood, so state expressly that I in nowise scoff at the new "Werdersche" Church, that Gothic cathedral on a reduced scale, which out of irony for us has been stuck between modern buildings, in order to demonstrate how ridiculous and foolish it would seem if we were to reinstate old worn-out institutions of the Middle Ages among the novel ordinances of a new time.

The above remarks apply exclusively to the outward appearance of Berlin, and if one wished to compare it with Munich in this respect, one could certainly state that this last town gives quite a contrary impression to that of Berlin. Munich, namely, is a town built by the people during successive generations, whose spirit is always visible in their masonry; so that, as in the witch scene in *Macbeth*, a chronological order of minds can be perceived, from the dark red spirits of the Middle Ages, who strode mail-clad out of the Gothic church portals, down to the civilised enlightened minds of our own time, which holds up to us a mirror wherein each can look upon himself with pleasure. The succeeding orders constitute a harmony; the barbaric does not shock us any more, and that which is tasteless distresses us no longer if we consider it as the beginning of a necessary transition. We are impressed, not displeased, at the sight of the barbaric cathedral which towers above the whole town, somewhat in the shape of a boot-jack, and encloses within its precincts the shades and the ghosts of

the Middle Ages. We notice, with but ever so little displeasure and even with jesting emotion, those garish-looking castles of a later period; that coarse German aping after the gaudy French "un-nature"; those splendid buildings of bad taste, extravagantly ornamented on the outside, and inside still more gaudily decorated with glaring allegories, gilded arabesques, stucco-work, and those pictures wherein numerous high and worthy lordlings are counterfeited. The knights with red, drunken, insipid faces, round which hang long curled wigs with powdered lions'-manes; the ladies with stiff toupée, and steel corsets, in which their hearts were laced together, and the unbecoming travelling-dress, which greatly added to their prosaic breadth. As already said, this sight does not put us out of humour, but it now helps us sympathetically to interpret the past at its just value; and when we examine the modern work which is upreared near the old, we feel as if a heavy wig were taken off our head, and that our heart were freed from steel fetters. I speak here of fine temples of art and noble palaces, which, in daring abundance, bloomed out of the mind of Klenze, the great master.

CHAPTER III.

It is somewhat ridiculous, between ourselves be it said, that the whole town should be called New Athens; and it goes against the grain with me to have to intercede for it under such a qualification. I felt this keenly

in the dialogue with the Berlineser Philistine, who, although he had spoken for some considerable time with me, was impolite enough to discern no Attic salt in New Athens.

"It is only to be found in Berlin," he cried out, loudly enough. "There only can you find wit and irony. Here there is good white beer, but certainly no irony."

"We have no irony," called out Nannerl, the slim waitress who ran past us at this moment; "but you can have any other kind of beer here."

It went to my heart that Nannerl should mistake irony for some sort of beer, perhaps for the best Stettin beer; and in order that in the future, at least, she should not expose herself in such a way, I began to indoctrinate her as follows: "Lovely Nannerl, irony is not a kind of beer, but an invention of the Berlineser, the cleverest people in the world, whose grievance is that they have come into the world too late to discover gunpowder; therefore, they strive to make an invention as important, and one that will be very useful even to those who have not invented powder. Formerly, dearest child, when any one perpetrated a stupidity, where was the remedy? What was done could not be undone, and people said, 'the fellow is an ass.' That was disagreeable. The Berlineser, who are the cleverest of people, and who commit unlimited stupidities, feel these disagreeables very deeply. The Ministry applied strenuous measures in order to mend matters; only the most glaring stupidities could be suppressed, the less obvious were permitted only in speech. But this concession was extended solely to professors and to high

statesmen; ordinary people could only give vent to their stupidities in secret. All these precautions, however, were of no avail; the suppressed stupidities sprang up on every special occasion more vigorously than before. They surged openly from below: they were even secretly protected from above. The dilemma was great, until at last a retrospective method was found whereby every stupidity could be undone or even transformed into wisdom itself. The method is quite simple, and consists in stating that each stupidity was done or said merely in irony. Thus, dearest child, does everything progress in this world; stupidity becomes irony, servile flattery becomes satire; natural coarseness, artful persiflage; positive madness, humour; ignorance, brilliant wit; and thou thyself may yet become the Aspasia of the New Athens."

I would have said more had not pretty Nannerl, whom I held by the corner of her apron, forcibly torn herself away as a storm of voices rose on all sides calling for "Beer! beer!" As to the Berlineser, he looked the personification of irony, as he noticed with what enthusiasm the tall foaming glasses were received, and, pointing out a group of beer drinkers who quaffed the hop-nectar, disputing its excellencies the while with heart-felt joy, he said, mockingly, "These are your Athenians!"

The volley of remarks which the man poured upon me pained me considerably, inasmuch as I have a great weakness for our New Athens. I therefore endeavoured to impress upon this carping critic that we had only a short time since hit upon the idea of posing as New Athenians, that we are still young novices, that our

great minds, our whole cultivated public, are not yet educated up to the idea, and cannot bear close scrutiny. Yet in our infancy, we are far from being complete. "Only the lowest posts, my dear friend," I pursued, "are filled, and it will not have escaped your notice that we have no lack of owls, of sycophants, of Phrynes. But there is so great a dearth of actors for the principal rôles, that one person is often forced to play several parts at one time. For example, our poet,¹ who has sung of the tender boy-loves of Greece, has been obliged to feign the coarseness of Aristophanes; but he can do all that a great poet should do, and has all the distinguishing qualities, with the exception, perhaps, of imagination and wit; and had he only plenty of money, he would be a rich man. What we lack, however, in quantity we possess in quality. We have only one great sculptor, but he is a "lion."² We have only one great orator, but I am persuaded that Demosthenes in Athens could not thunder so well over the malt auction. If we have not as yet poisoned a Socrates, it is in truth not for lack of poison. And if we do not yet possess a true *Demos*, an entire population of demagogues, at all events we offer an exquisite example³ of the species, a demagogue who in himself is a whole host of swaggerers, noodles, cowards, and such-like vagabonds, and here you see him himself."

I cannot resist the temptation to describe in greater detail the figure that presented itself before us at this moment. I leave it to others to decide whether or not his head belonged by right to a human being, and whether, therefore, he is legally justified in considering

¹ Platen.² Löwe.³ Massmann.

himself a man. I would be much more inclined to consider it the head of an ape, and only out of courtesy can I allow it to pass for one pertaining to a human being. Its covering consisted of a cloth cap, in shape like the helmet of Mambrino, and of stiff black hair which was divided by an infantile parting and hung long behind. On the forefront of this head, which did duty for a face, the goddess of triviality had impressed her stamp, and so forcibly that the nose upon it was nearly squashed; the downcast eyes seemed afflicted by the futile search for this nose, and an evil smile contorted the mouth. The new-comer's clothing consisted of an old German coat, certainly slightly modified, in accordance with the stringent exigencies of modern European civilisation, but in the cut there lingered reminiscences of the one worn by Arminius in the forest of Teutoburg, of which the original pattern is preserved by an association of patriotic tailors who have cherished the secret tradition as sacredly as that of Gothic architecture was by the mystic brotherhood of masons. A white-washed rag, which contrasted with the naked, parchment-coloured neck, covered the collar of this remarkable coat. Long dirty hands hung out of long sleeves, between which there oscillated a lanky body upon two short, shuffling legs. The whole creature was a side-splitting parody of the Apollo Belvedere.

"And that is the demagogue of New Athens?" asked the Berlineser, with a satirical laugh. "Great heavens, is that a countryman of mine? I can hardly believe my bodily eyes. That is surely he who—— No, is it possible?"

"Yes, you blind Berlineser," I answered, not without

warmth. "You ignore your native geniuses and you stone your prophets. We, on the contrary, know how to make use of all!"

"And in what way do you use this luckless insect?"

"He is of use whenever jumping, crawling sensibility, a large appetite, piety, much old German, little Latin, and no Greek is of service. He jumps really well over a stick; he tabulates every possible sort of leap, and makes catalogues of all the different readings of the old German poems. Moreover, he represents the love of the Fatherland without being in the least degree dangerous. For it is very well known that he withdrew himself from the old German demagogues, among whom he was ill at ease, just at the right moment, when their cause showed somewhat dangerous symptoms and thus ceased to be in accord with the Christian sentiments of his tender heart. Since then, however, now that the danger is over and the martyrs have suffered for their opinions, which almost all have voluntarily relinquished, so that even our hot-headed barbers have forsworn their patriotic coats,—since then has begun the bloom-tide for our far-sighted saviour of his country. He, alone, has preserved the demagogue customs, and the locutions which belong thereto. He prates still about Arminius the Cherusker and his lady Thusnelda, as though he were their fair-haired descendant. He steadily cherishes his German patriotic hatred against the French Babylon, against the inventor of soap, against Thiersch's heathenish Greek grammar, against Quintilius Varus, against gloves, and against all men who have respectable noses. Thus he remains as a peripatetic memorial of a bygone time; and, like the last of the Mohicans, he, too,

is the sole survivor of a great powerful horde, the last of the Demagogues. You see, therefore, that since there is a dearth of demagogues in New Athens, we can make use of this man.

"We have in him a very good demagogue, and so tame withal, that he will eat out of the hand hazel-nuts, chestnuts, cheese, sausages, in short he will lick up whatever is given to him; and, as he is now unique of his kind, later on, when he has succumbed, we shall have the great advantage of having him stuffed, and of handing him down to posterity with his skin and his hair as the last of the Demagogues. I implore you, however, to say nothing of this to Professor Lichtenstein in Berlin, for he would lay claim to him at once for the Zoological Museum, which might cause a war between Prussia and Bavaria, considering that we would never yield him up. Already the English have had their eye upon him, and have offered 2777 guineas for him; already the Austrians have tried to exchange him for a giraffe; but our Ministry has stated that the last Demagogue is priceless to us, and that he will one day be the pride of the Natural History Cabinet, and an ornament to our town."

The Berlinesse seemed to hear me with a certain amount of distraction; more beautiful objects had claimed his attention, and at length he broke in upon my discourse with these words—

"Pray excuse me if I interrupt you, but do tell me what sort of a dog that is, that is running about there?"

"That is another puppy."

"Ah, you misunderstand me; I mean that big, white-spotted dog without a tail."

"My dear sir, that dog belongs to the new Alcibiades."

"Well then," remarked the Berlineser, "where is the new Alcibiades himself?"

"Between ourselves," I answered, "that post is not yet filled, we have only the dog as yet."

CHAPTER IV.

THE place in which this conversation was held was called Bogenhausen, or Newburghausen, or Villa Hompesch, or Montglesgarten, or the Schlossel. Indeed, there is no need to give it a name; for, if we wish to drive there from Munich, the coachman at once understands us by a certain thirsty wink of the eye, a certain blissful anticipatory bend of the neck, and other such indicative grimaces. The Arab has a thousand expressions for a sword, the French for love, the English for hanging, the Germans for drinking, and the New Athenian for designating the spot where he wishes to drink. The beer at the above-mentioned resort is really very good, better cannot be had even at the Prytaneum, vulgarly named Bockkeller; the flavour is excellent, especially when tasted on the high terrace, whence the line of the Tyrolese Alps can be seen. I sat there very often last winter, and gazed at the snow-clad mountains, which glittered in the sunshine like pure molten silver. There was winter likewise in my soul: thoughts and feelings were as though frost-bound; inspiration was dried up and dead within me; thereto were added the sorry

politics of our time, the grief caused me by the death of a lovely being, an old hankering regret, and a cold in my head. Moreover, I drank a great deal of beer, because I was assured it made the blood light. But the best Attic beer availed me nothing, for I had already accustomed myself in England to drink porter.

At length there came a day when all was changed. The sun broke through the clouds and suckled the earth, that old child, with the milk of its beams. The mountains shivered with delight, and the snow-tears flowed plentifully; the ice-covering that had veiled the lake cracked and dissolved. The earth opened her blue eyes; from her bosom there sprang forth amorous flowers, and tuneful wood; green palaces of nightingales. All Nature laughed, and her mirth was spring. Then in me also a new spring awoke; new flowers budded in my heart; sensations of liberty bloomed forth like roses, and secret longings, like early violets springing up between many a useless nettle. Hope once more threw its green glamour over the graves of my dead desires; the melodies of poetry came back to me, even as the birds of passage quit their warm southern winter homes to seek again their forsaken northern mists; this wearied northern heart of mine beat and expanded once again as in days of yore, only I know not how it came about. Is it a fair or a brown sun that has re-awakened the spring-time in my heart, has kissed to waking the sleeping flowers, and therein, by her smile, has taught the nightingales to sing? Was it generous Nature herself who sought to rouse her echo in my breast, and who mirrored therein her springtide glory? I cannot tell. but I know it was on the Bogenhausen Terrace, in

sight of the Tyrolese Alps, that a new enchantment stole over my heart. Often, when I sat there deep in thought, I seemed to see a wonderfully beautiful, youthful face looking over yonder mountains, and I wished I had wings that I might hasten away to Italy, the land of its home. Often I felt myself fanned by the perfumed air from orange and lemon groves that wafted seductive promises to me from Italy. Once, in the golden evening twilight, I saw the young god of spring clear and distinct on the summit of a mountain; flowers and laurels crowned his radiant head, and with laughing eyes and ruddy lips he cried, "I love thee, come to me in Italy!"

CHAPTER V.

WELL, therefore, might my eyes glisten longingly when in despair at the interminable talk of the Philistine, I looked across at the beautiful Tyrolese mountains, and sighed deeply.

But my Philistine found new subjects for conversation, even in these looks and sighs. "Ah yes, I also long to be in Constantinople! Ah, to see Constantinople has ever been the one wish of my life; and now, alas, the Russians must have already entered Constantinople! Have you seen St. Petersburg?" I replied in the negative, and begged him to tell me something about it. But it was not he himself but his brother-in-law, the War Councillor, who had been there the previous summer, and it must be altogether a unique town.

"Have you seen Copenhagen?" As I again answered no to this question and requested a description of the town from him, he laughed slyly and wagged his head with very pleasure to and fro, and assured me, on his honour, that I could form no adequate idea of it unless I had been there myself.

"For the moment," I answered, "that is quite out of the question. I intend to take a different journey, a project I formed this spring, namely, to travel to Italy."

When the man heard these words he sprang up suddenly from his chair, twirled himself round three times on one foot, and trilled out, "Tirili! Tirili! Tirili!"

That was the deciding prick of the spur. "I will start to-morrow," I decided on the spot. "I will hesitate no longer; I will, as soon as possible, see the land that can rouse so great an amount of exhilaration in the driest of Philistines, that at the mere mention of it he should pipe like a quail." While I packed my trunks in the house the sound of this "tirili" rang constantly in my ears; and my brother, Maximilian Heine, who accompanied me the other day as far as the Tyrol, could not conceive why it was that during the whole way I did not speak a sensible word, but "tirilired" without ceasing.

CHAPTER VI.

TIRILI! Tirili! Tirili! I live! I feel the sweet pains of existence, I feel all the joys and sorrows of the world, I suffer for the salvation of the whole of mankind, I

expiate their sins, but I share in them also. And not only with men ; I am also with the plant world, whose thousand green tongues tell me exquisite stories ; they know that I have not the pride of man, that I speak with the lowliest of the meadow flowers as readily as with the highest fir-trees.

Ah, I know but too well what is the fate of such firs. From the depths of the valley they soar into the heights of the heavens, they almost overtop the very heights of the precipitous mountain-peaks. But how long does this supremacy last ? At the most a few miserable centuries. Then they break with the weight of years and roll upon the ground. In the night-time the malicious owls emerge from the clefts in the rocks and mock at their misery : " See, the strong firs who thought to measure themselves with the mountains, now they lie low and the mountains remain forever unmoved."

The eagle, sitting solitary on his chosen peak, and hearing these words of scorn, must be filled with compassion. He reflects upon his own fate. Neither does he know into what depths he also will one day be thrown. But the stars shine so calmly, the waters of the woods murmur so consolingly, and his own soul rises so proudly above all these petty thoughts, that he soon forgets them again. Let but the sun shine out, and he feels once more as of yore ; he floats upwards to him, and when high enough pours out all his joys and sorrows in song to him. His fellow-creatures, especially men, think that he cannot sing, and know not that he only sings when he is out of their reach, and that he is too proud to be heard by any other than the sun. Herein he is right. It might perchance occur to some one of his feathered race to review

his song. I have myself experienced what such critics say : the fowl stands upon one leg and clucks that the singer has no soul ; the turkey-cock gobbles that he lacks true earnestness ; the dove coos that he does not know true love ; the goose cackles that he is not sufficiently wise ; the capon chirps that he is not moral ; the wren twitters that he, alas, has no religion ; the sparrow pipes that he isn't prolific enough ; lapwings, magpies, owls, all these croak, chirp, and chatter. The nightingale alone does not voice in with these critics. Careless about the whole wide world, his only thought, his only song, is of the red rose ; with loving longings he flutters round the red rose, and in his infatuation he dashes himself in among the beloved thorns, bleeds, and sings.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE is an eagle in the German fatherland whose sun-song resounds so powerfully that it is heard here below, and the nightingale even leans an attentive ear in despite of her melodious pains.

It is thou, Karl Immermann, and my thoughts have often been of thee in the land whereof thou hast sung so beautifully. How could I travel through the Tyrol without thinking of the *Trauerspiel* ?

Although, indeed, I have seen the thing under another colour, yet I admire the poet who out of the fulness of his heart and imagination can create so close a verisimilitude of that which he has never seen.

It tickles me immensely that the *Trauerspiel* in

Tyrol is forbidden in the Tyrol. I bethought me of the word that my friend Moser wrote to me, when he announced to me that the second volume of the *Reisebilder* was interdicted. "It is useless for the Government to forbid the book; it will be read in spite of it."

At Innsbruck, at the Golden Eagle, where Andreas Hofer had lodged, sojourned, and where every corner is full of pictures and memories of him, I asked the landlord, Herr Niederkirchner, if he could recount to me much concerning the *Sandwirth*. Thereupon, the old man overflowed with loquacity, and confided to me with knowing eye-winks, that all the stories were now fully printed, but that all were also secretly interdicted.

Then he conducted me to a dark little room, where he treasured his relics of the Tyrolese war. He unrolled a dirty blue paper from a well-thumbed small green book, which I, to my astonishment, recognised to be Immermann's *Trauerspiel in Tyrol*. I told him, not without blushing pride, that the man who had written it was my friend. Herr Niederkirchner in his turn was eager to know as much as possible of this poet, and I told him he was an energetic man, strong in stature, very honourable, and very skilful in affairs of the pen, so that it would be difficult to find his like. That he was a Russian Herr Niederkirchner would absolutely not believe, and cried out with pitying laughter, "Why, impossible!"

He would not allow himself to be dissuaded that Immermann was a Tyrolese and had taken part in the Tyrolese war. "How could he otherwise know all about it?"

Strange are the whims of people! They demand their stories from the hand of the poet and not from the hand of the historian. They do not require the true statement of naked matter-of-fact, except of those facts which are embodied in the original poetry out of which they sprang. The poet knows this, and not without frequent exultation he models at will the memories of people, perhaps to the mockery of the dry-as-dust historiographer and the "parchmenty" states-reader.

It rejoiced me not a little to see, hanging in the booths of last year's fair, brightly-coloured pictures of the history of Belisarius, and, indeed, not according to Prokop, but faithfully on the lines of Schenk's tragedies. "So is history perverted," cried the learned friend who accompanied me; "it knows nothing of that revenge of an insulted wife, of that imprisoned son, of that beloved daughter, and of such-like modern sentimental notions!" Is this, however, really a fault? Shall proceedings, therefore, be instituted against the poet for the falsification? No, for I deny the accusation. History is never falsified in the hands of poets. They interpret the spirit of history faithfully, though it may be by means of self-inferred circumstances and imagined details. There are people who hand down their history solely through poetry—for example, the Indians. Songs such as the *Mahabarata* give the spirit of Indian history much more truly than any written compendium with all its dates could do. In this respect I might assert that Walter Scott's novels sometimes render the spirit of English history much more truly than Hume does; at all events, Sartorius was right when he, in his appendix to

Spittler, ranks those novels as sources of English history.

It is with poets as with dreamers in sleep; though the soul's receptivity is unimpaired, the impressions it derives from its environment is superseded by one, unreal, yet sufficiently actual to induce identical sensations. Thus, in Immermann's *Tragedies* many of the external accessories are arbitrary creations of the poet; but the hero himself—the impressional centre-point—is faithfully and realistically drawn; and if, on the one hand, these dream-figures themselves appear to be visionary, this principal one, on the other, is wholly conformable to truth. Baron Hormayr, who is the most competent authority on this subject, drew my attention to this fact on the one occasion when I had the pleasure of meeting him. Immermann has successfully delineated the mystical tendencies of the soul, the superstitious religious emotions, the epic of man. He has faithfully depicted that dove who, with a naked sword in his mouth, like warring Love, swept heroically over the Tyrolese mountains, till the Mantuan bullets pierced through its loyal heart.

What, however, reflects most honour upon this poet is that he does not strive to heighten the effect of his pictures by making a foil of the raging Gestler in order better to glorify his rival Hofer. As this one is a dove with the sword, so is that one an eagle with an olive branch.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN Herr Niederkerchner's inn-parlour at Innsbruck there hung, harmoniously near to one another, the pictures of Andreas Hofer, of Napoleon Bonaparte, and of Ludwig of Bavaria.

Innsbruck itself is a dull uninhabitable town. In winter, it may perhaps be somewhat more inspiring and comfortable, when the high mountains which surround it are covered with snow, when the avalanches rumble, and, above all, when the ice cracks and sparkles. I found the heads of these mountains wrapped round with clouds, like grey turbans. There was the Martins wand, the scene of the most beautiful imperial legend; for above all others does the memory of the deeds of the knightly Max still linger and resound in the Tyrol.

In the Court Church are the far-famed statues of the princes and princesses of the house of Austria, and of their ancestors, among them various members are represented concerning whom, even till the present day, it has been impossible to understand how such an honour befell them. The effigies are above life-size, cast in iron, and are ranged around the tomb of Maximilian. As, however, the church is small and the roof is low, they give the impression of being black wax figures standing in a market booth. On the pedestal of the greater number there is written the name of the august personage that they represent. While I reflected upon these statues, some English people entered the church.

A haggard man, with gaping face and thumbs hooked

into the arm-holes of his white waistcoat, and between his teeth a leather *Guide des Voyageurs* came first; behind him followed his tall life's companion, no longer quite young, already a little faded, nevertheless still a sufficiently pretty woman; finally, a red-faced lacquey with white powdered hair, stepped stiffly in a coat of livery, with his wooden hands fully freighted with Milady's gloves, Alpine flowers, and a pug dog. The trio proceeded in single file to the end of the church, where the son of Albion explained the statues to his wife, that is to say, out of his *Guide des Voyageurs*, in exact sequence. "The first statue is King Clovis of France; the next is King Arthur of England; the third is Rudolf von Hapsburg," etc. But as, however, the poor Englishman began the row from the top, instead of from the end, as described in the *Guide des Voyageurs*, he fell into the most comical mistakes, which became the more ludicrous when, standing before the statue of a woman, he mistook it for that of a man, and *vice versa*, so that he could not understand why Rudolf von Hapsburg was represented in woman's clothes, and the Queen Maria with iron breeches and a long beard. I remarked casually, for I always willingly assist with my knowledge, that those were probably the prescribed costumes of the day, or that it might have been the especial desire of these high personages to be cast in this guise and in no other—who could object to that? The pug barked shrilly, the lacquey gaped, his master blew his nose, and Milady said, "A fine exhibition, very fine indeed!"

CHAPTER IX.

BRIXEN is the second largest town in the Tyrol at which I put up. It lies in a valley, and when I reached it it was shrouded in the mists and shadows of evening. Over it brooded a twilight stillness, the melancholy clang of bells ; the sheep tripped along to their stalls, men to the church ; everywhere the pervasive smell of ugly pictures, of saints and of dried hay.

"The Jesuits are at Brixen," I had read a short time previously in the *Hesperus*. I looked about for them in all the streets, but I saw no one who resembled a Jesuit, unless it were yonder stout man with the clerical, three-cornered hat and the black coat of the pastor cut, which was old and well worn, and which contrasted oddly with his shining new black breeches.

"That can be no Jesuit," I said to myself at length ; for I had always thought of Jesuits as being somewhat thinner. Do Jesuits, in very truth, still exist ? There are times when I think that their existence is a mere chimera, that the fear we have of them haunts our minds long after the danger has passed away. All this anger against the Jesuits reminds me of people who go about with their umbrellas open long after the rain has ceased.

Yes, it seems to me sometimes that the devil, the nobles, and the Jesuits, exist only as long as men believe them to do so. Of the devil we can most confidently assert it, for it is only believers who have ever seen him. Also with regard to the nobles, in due course of events we shall find that *la bonne société* will cease to exist at that

moment when the honest burgher no longer has the goodness to consider it as *la bonne société*. But the Jesuits? At all events they no longer possess their old breeches! The old Jesuits lie in the grave with their breeches, their ambitions, their plans for the world, their quarrels, destructions, their prohibitions, and their poisons; and any one that still lingers in the world in sleek new breeches is not so much their spirit as their ghost; a silly, imbecile ghost that seeks daily by word and deed to prove to us how little it is to be feared. Truly it reminds us of the story of a pastor in the Thuringen Forest, who had formerly been held in great fear by his people, but who delivered them from this thralldom by removing his head from off his shoulders before their eyes, and showing them how hollow and empty it was inside. I cannot refrain, in addition, from relating that I found an opportunity of more closely observing the stout man with the sleek new breeches, in order to convince myself that he was no Jesuit, but simply one of God's ordinary cattle. I met him, namely, in the guest-room of my inn, where he dines nightly in the company of a tall, thin man addressed as "Your Excellence," who so closely resembled that old bachelor gentleman described by Shakespeare that it seemed as though Nature had been guilty of plagiarism. Both seasoned their meal by importuning the waitress with caresses, which the pretty buxom maid seemed not a little to resent, for she tore herself forcibly away if the one caught hold of her, or the other sought to embrace her.

Thereupon they let forth their grossest obscenities, which they knew the girl could not avoid hearing, as

she had to remain in the room to attend to the guests, and also to set the table for me. When, nevertheless, their improprieties became intolerable, the young girl suddenly put everything down and ran out of the door; she returned after a few minutes with a little child on her arm, which she carried about with her during her service in the guest-room, in spite of the hindrance it was to her.

The two cronies, however, the clergyman and the noble lord, ceased their molestation of the girl, who continued to serve them with quiet seriousness devoid of rancour. The conversation took another turn. Both chattered the usual tittle-tattle about the great conspiracies against the Church and State; they agreed upon the necessity of stronger measures, and several times they stretched out the hand of holy alliance to one another.

CHAPTER X.

THE works of Joseph von Hormayr are indispensable to the study of the Tyrol; they are even yet, in the present day, the best and often the only source of information. He is to the Tyrol what Johannes von Müller is to Switzerland. The similarity between these two historians is very obvious. They are kindred souls; both in their youth were inspired by their native mountains; both were diligent, industrious and careful, with an historical bent of mind and disposition of feeling. Johannes von Müller's brain, epically inclined, turned towards the history of the past; Joseph von Hormayr, with more

ardent feelings, tears the heart out of the present, and he unhesitatingly devoted his life to that which was dear to him.

Bartholdy's *War of the Tyrolese Peasants in the year 1809* is a clever and well-written book, and if it have faults, they are the necessary results of the generous disposition of the author, who has an obvious predilection for the oppressed party, and for the blurring smoke of the gunpowder which still enveloped the events when he wrote. Many of the memorable occurrences of that time have not been committed to writing and live only in the memory of the people, who no longer willingly speak of them, because the memory of many disappointed hopes is thereby revived. And the unfortunate Tyrolese have also been obliged to undergo all kinds of experiences. If they are asked whether they have reaped the reward of all their loyalty that was promised to them in those days of peril, they shrug their shoulders good-naturedly and say naïvely: "Perhaps it was not meant so seriously, and the Emperor has much to think of, and many things escape his mind."

Console yourself, poor fellows! Promises have not been made to you alone! Thus it often happens in the big slave-ships that in times of great storms, when the ship is in peril, recourse is had to the black men who lie huddled together in the hold. Their chains are broken, and they are promised by all that is holy that they shall be given their freedom if, through their activity, the ship be saved. The poor, simple blacks rejoice once more to be in the daylight; hurrah! they hurry to the pumps, they climb, spring, cut the masts, wind the cable—in short, they work ceaselessly till the

danger is passed. Then, it is hardly necessary to say, they are led back to the ship's hold, conveniently chained, and again left to their sinister reflections upon these merchants of souls, whose only care, once the threatening danger is passed, is to entrap more souls.

O navis, referent in mare te novi
Fluctus ? etc.

When my old master explained this ode of Horace, in which the Senate is compared to a ship, he always indulged in political reflections, which he suspended when the battle of Leipsic was fought, and the whole class broke up.

My old teacher had foreseen all. When the first news of the fight reached us he shook his grey head. Now I know what this headshake signified. Soon came the detailed accounts, and we passed mysteriously to one another gaily-coloured and highly edifying pictures representing how the leaders of the army kneeled down upon the battle-field and thanked God.

"Yes, they can thank God," said my teacher, and laughed as he was wont to laugh when he explained Sallust. "The Emperor Napoleon has beaten them so often that at last they have learned the secret from him."

Then came the alliance, and the bad poems of deliverance, Herman and Thusnelda, hurrah ! and the Lady's Associations, and the acorns of the Fatherland, and the eternal boasting over the battle of Leipsic, in ceaseless succession. "These people," remarked my teacher, "are like the Thebans, who, when they once succeeded in defeating those invincible Spartans, prated so eternally of the battle that Antisthenes said of them, "You behave

yourselves like boys who do not know how to contain themselves when they have once thrashed their school-master. Dear lads, it would have been better if we ourselves had tasted the birch."

Shortly after the old man died. Prussian grass grows on his grave, and on it graze the noble horses of our restored knights.

CHAPTER XI.

THE Tyrolese are handsome, cheerful, honest, brave, and of impenetrable narrow-mindedness. They are a healthy race, perhaps because they are too stupid to be ill. I might also call them a noble race, because that they are dainty in the choice of their food, very clean in their habits; only, they are wholly lacking in respect for the dignity of Personalities. The Tyrolese show a sort of smiling humorous servility, which is in reality wholly serious. The women in the Tyrol salute *thee* with such complaisant friendliness, the men shake *thee* so heartily by the hand, and gesticulate over it with such friendly cordiality, as to make you almost believe yourself to be one of their near relations, or at least one of themselves. But in reality, they never allow it to escape their memory that they are but ordinary folk, and that you are a man of distinction, who would be in no wise displeased when simple folk, without timidity, put themselves on an equal footing with him. Herein they show an inherently right instinct; the most rigid aristocrat rejoices when he finds an opportunity for condescension; for by this means he feels how high his position is.

At home the Tyrolese practise this servility gratis, abroad they seek to profit thereby. They traffic with their personality, their nationality. These gaily-dressed "counterpane" merchants, these cheery Bua-Tyrolese, whom we see wandering about in their national costume, will readily permit a joke, but something must at the same time be purchased from them.

That Rainer family, who have been in England, understand this thoroughly; moreover, they had an excellent adviser who knew the disposition of the English nobility thoroughly. Hence their good reception in the drawing-rooms of the European aristocratic *in the west end of the town*. When, last summer, in the brilliantly-lighted concert-rooms of the fashionable world of London, I saw these Tyrolese singers, clad in their national costume, appear upon the platform, and when I heard proceeding from it those songs which are so naïvely and joyously yodelled among the Tyrolese Alps, and wake loving echoes in us, in our northern German hearts, —my soul was wrung with bitter displeasure, the approving smiles of all those lips were to me like the stings of serpents. It was to me as though the purity of the German words were sullied, and as if the sweet mysteries of the German sensibilities were profaned before a strange populace. I could not join in the applause given to these shameless hawkers of modesty; and a Swiss, who quitted the hall with me, moved by the same feelings, justly remarked, "We Swiss give much for our best cheese and our best blood, but we can hardly endure to hear the Alp horn blown in a foreign land, much less to blow it ourselves for gold."

CHAPTER XII.

THE Tyrol is very beautiful, but the most beautiful landscape cannot charm when the weather is cloudy and the mind is troubled likewise. With me the latter is always the result of the former ; and as it was raining outside, in my heart also there was bad weather.

Only now and again did I venture my head out of the window; then I saw heaven-high mountains that gazed solemnly at me, and that nodded a good journey to me with their huge heads and long grey beards. Here and there I noticed also a little distant blue mountain that seem to stand tiptoe, and to peer right curiously over the shoulders of the other mountains, doubtless in order to see me. Over all resounded the brawling of the hill-streams, which madly pitched themselves from the heights, and dashed into one seething current in the dark valley depths.

The people stayed in their pretty, clean cottages, which lay strewn about on the great declivities, or perched on the most rugged bluffs, even to the mountain-peaks; pretty, clean cottages, with, usually, a long balcony, which in its turn was ornamented with drying clothes, holy pictures, flower-pots, and girlish faces. These little houses are so tastefully painted, white and green by preference, as though they too wore the national costume, green braces over a white shirt.

When I saw such cottages lying in the desolate rain, my heart would often go out to the people who sat dry and contentedly under those roofs. "Life there," I

thought, "must be very sweet and very cosy; and the old grandmother is without a doubt relating homely stories."

While the carriage inexorably drove past I looked back again and again to see the column of bluish smoke wreathing out of the little chimneys; and the rain fell more heavily without and within me, till the drops almost flowed from my eyes.

Often too my heart rose up, and, in spite of the bad weather, it climbed to the people who live right at the crest of the mountain, and who rarely, perhaps once in a lifetime, come down from it, and know little of what happens here below. Of politics they are wholly ignorant, except of the fact that they have an Emperor who wears a white coat and red breeches. That was told to them by an old uncle, who had himself heard it at Innsbruck from Black Sepperl, who had been in Vienna. When the patriots clambered up to them and eloquently represented to them that they had now a Prince who wore a blue coat and white breeches, they seized their guns, kissed wife and child, climbed down the mountains, and allowed themselves to be fought with to the death, for the sake of the white coat and the beloved old red breeches.

In truth it matters nothing for what a man dies if only he dies for that which he loves, and so a warm, loyal death is better than a cold, faithless life. The songs of such deaths, the sweet rhymes and ringing words, are alone enough to warm our heart when damp clinging mist and importunate cares depress us. Many such songs resounded through my heart when I drove over the mountains of the Tyrol. The familiar fir-

forests whispered many forgotten words of love back to memory. Especially when the great blue mountain-lakes looked at me with such inexpressible yearning out of their azure depths, my thoughts turned again to the two children who loved each other so fondly, and died together. It is an old old story that no one now believes, and of which I myself only remember a few scattered rhymes—

“ There were two kingly children
Who loved each other truly;
They could not come together,
The water was too deep——”

These words began of themselves to ring over and over in my mind when I saw, by one of those blue lakes, a little girl and boy standing one on either shore; both were wonderfully prettily dressed in the bright national costume, with green pointed beribboned hats on their heads, and they sent each other greetings to and fro—

“ They could not come together,
The water was too deep.”

CHAPTER XIII.

IN Southern Tyrol the weather cleared, the Italian sun gave evidence of its near approach, the mountains became warmer and of more glowing colours; soon I saw the twining vine-tendrils upon them, and I could oftener look out of the carriage window. But when my

head leant out, my heart followed—my heart with all its love, its sorrows, and its foolishness. It has often happened to me that this poor heart has been pierced through with thorns when it leant out towards the rose-bushes which bloom on the wayside; and the roses of the Tyrol are not at all ugly.

When I drove through Steinach and saw the market, wherein Immermann in his drama depicts the meeting between the "Sandwirth" and his companions, I found that the market was much too small for the meeting of insurgents, but nevertheless big enough wherein to fall in love. There are only a few small white houses there, and out of a little window peeped a little rebel Sandwirthin, who took aim and shot with her big eyes; had the carriage not rolled past so quickly she would have had time to re-load, and I certainly would have been struck. I cried, "Coachman, drive on; one cannot joke with so beautiful a foe; she sets fire to the house over one's head."

In my character of a thorough traveller, I should state that the landlady of the inn in Sterzing is herself an old woman, but that she has, in compensation, two young daughters, who, when your heart goes out to them, warm it thoroughly with their reception. But I cannot forget thee, thou most beautiful of all, thou lovely spinner of the Italian frontier! O hadst thou given to me, as Ariadne to Theseus, the thread of the spindle to guide me through the labyrinth of life, the Minotaur would now have been slain, and I would love thee and kiss thee, and never leave thee! "It's a good sign when a woman smiles," says a Chinese writer, and a German author was quite of this opinion when, in

Southern Tyrol, on the confines of Italy, he paused before a mountain at whose foot stood one of those little houses, which look at us so amicably with their familiar balcony and their naïve frescoes. On the one side stood a large wooden crucifix, which served as a support to a vine shoot, so that it was a thing of ghastly beauty to see how life embraced death, how the delicate green tendrils wound themselves round the bleeding body and crucified arms and legs of the Saviour. On the other side of the house stood a little dove-cot, whose feathered inmates flew hither and thither, while a pure white dove sat upon the point of the pretty little roof, that projected like the arched stone crown of a shrine over the head of the pretty spinner.

She sat in the little gallery and span, not after the method of the German spinning-wheel, but in that primeval way by which the flax-wound thread twirls freely downwards.

So span the king's daughters in Greece. She span, and smiled. The dove brooded stilly above her head, and over the house ranged the high mountains whose snow-peaks glittered in the sun, so that they seemed like solemn giant sentinels, with burnished helmets on their heads.

She span and smiled; and I verily believe that she span her threads round my heart, while the carriage drove past somewhat slowly on account of the broad stream of the Eisach, which bounded the other side of the road. The pretty features haunted my memory the whole day; above all I saw that lovely face that a Greek sculptor seemed to have formed out of the perfume of a white rose, aërially delicate, divinely noble, such as

perhaps he once, when a youth, dreamt of and much less understood. But I saw them, and read them, those romantic stars, whose magic lit up that antique beauty. The whole day long I saw these eyes, and I dreamt of them in the following night. There she sat again and smiled; the doves fluttered here and there like *amorini*; the white dove over her head waved its wings mystically; behind her more grimly rose the helmeted watchers; before her raced the brook, wilder and more stormily; the vines with anxious haste encircled the crucified wooden figure, whose suffering eyes were opened and whose wounds bled in painful excitement;—but she span and smiled, and to the thread of her distaff hung my heart like a dancing spindle.

CHAPTER XIV.

As the sun's radiance streamed in greater power and beauty out of the heavens, and mountain and castle were veiled in films of gold, so also my heart grew warmer and lighter; in my breast the flowers bloomed again, and flowers sprouted there into light of day, and grew great above my head; and amidst these heart-blossoms of my fancy was the pretty spinner with her heavenly smile. Rapt in such dreams, myself a dream, I entered Italy; and as during the transit I had almost forgotten whither I journeyed, so I almost received a shock when all the great Italian eyes looked at me, and when the brilliantly-coloured confusion of the Italian

life, with all its reality, its warmth, its chatter, streamed past me.

This happened to me in the town of Trient, which I reached on a lovely Sunday afternoon, at the time when the heat of the day lessens and the Italians wake to walk up and down the streets. This town lies old and ruined in a wide circle of fresh green mountains, which, like gods with eternal youth, look down upon the perishable handiwork of mortals.

Close by lies the high castle, now broken and crumbling, which once commanded the town—a romantic edifice of a romantic age, with pinnacles, parapets, battlements, and with a broad round tower, where now only owls and Austrian invalids are housed. The town itself is also of romantic construction. One is filled with wonder at the first sight of these mediæval houses, with their faded frescoes, their mutilated statues of saints; with their turrets, their barred windows, and those projecting gables disposed in the form of alcoves resting upon grey old worn pillars, themselves in need of support. Such an aspect would be all too mournful did not Nature freshen these dying stones with new life, if the sweet vine did not tenderly and caressingly twine round these tottering pillars, as youth upholds age; and if still sweeter girlish faces did not peep out of those dim oriel-windows, and send a ripple of laughter to the German stranger, who, like a sleep-wandering dreamer, stumbled through the flowering ruins.

I was really as in a dream, in a dream wherein one tries to remember something that one has already dreamed.

I looked alternately at the houses and the people,

and it seemed to me almost as though I had seen these houses in their more palmy days, when the colours of their pretty paintings were still brilliant, when the gold decorations of the windows were not yet blackened; and when the marble Madonna, who carries the child in her arms, had still her beautiful head which iconoclastic times have so remorselessly mutilated. The faces of the old women, too, seemed so familiar to me, as though they had been cut out of those old Italian paintings I had, when a boy, once seen in the Düsseldorf galleries. In like manner the old men seemed to be long-forgotten well-known friends, and they looked at me with serious eyes, as through a vista of a thousand years. Even the fresh young girls had the vaguely suggestive air of having died a thousand years ago and of having revived to the full bloom of life; so much so that a shudder went through me, but a sweet shudder, such as I experienced when in the solitary hour of midnight I pressed my lips to those of Marie, a marvellously beautiful woman who had no other fault than that of being dead. Then I laughed at myself once again, and it seemed to me as though the whole town was nought else than a pretty novel that I had once read—that, in truth, I myself had created; and that I was bewitched by my own phantasy, startled by the pictures of my own conjuring. Perhaps, also, I thought, the whole is but a dream, and I would have given a thaler with genuine pleasure for a single box on the ears in order to know whether I was awake or asleep.

I made a narrow escape of receiving this article at a cheaper bargain when I stumbled over the stout fruit-woman at the corner of the market. She contented

herself, however, with hurling at me a voluble box on the ears, through which I, at any rate, gained the certainty that I was of a truth in the actual present, in the middle of the market-place of Trient, close to the great fountain out of whose copper tritons and dolphins sprang the purling silver-lucid water. On the left stood an old palace, whose walls were painted with coloured allegorical figures, and on whose terrace a few grey Austrian soldiers were being drilled into heroism. To the right stood a little Lombard-Gothic house of capricious construction, from whose interior a sweet, tremulous girlish voice trilled so fresh and clear that the weather-beaten walls trembled with pleasure, or from age; while above, out of a gable window, showed a black head of hair curled with labyrinthine contortions worthy of a comedian, under which was a sharp-featured face, that was rouged only on the left cheek, and looked like a pancake that had been baked only on one side. But in front of me, in the centre, rose the ancient cathedral, not big, not gloomy, but attractive and confiding like cheerful old age.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN I pushed aside the green silk *portière* that covered the entrance to the cathedral, and entered the house of God, my body and soul were agreeably refreshed by the incense-laden air that floated therein, and by the soft mysterious light that poured through the stained glass

windows on to the kneeling congregation, mostly women, ranged in long rows on the low rush-chairs.

They prayed with slight movements of the lips, and fanned themselves constantly the while with large green fans, so that nothing was heard but a ceaseless indistinguishable whisper, and nothing was seen but swaying fans and waving veils. The jarring tread of my boots disturbed many a devout one ; great Catholic eyes looked at me, half curiously, half enticingly, and would fain have counselled me to kneel down there also, and seek a soul's *siesta*.

In truth, such a cathedral with its shrouded light, its pervading coolness, is an agreeable refuge from the outside blinding sunshine, and from the oppressive heat. We have no conception of this in our Protestant North Germany, where the churches are not so comfortably built, and where the light shoots in so glaringly through the unstained windows, and where even the frigidity of the preacher is not sufficient protection against the heat.

One may say what one will, but Catholicism is a good summer religion. It is pleasant to lie on the benches of these old cathedrals, to enjoy there a quiet devotion, a pious *dolce far niente* ; one prays and dreams and sins in thought, the Madonnas bend so forgivingly from their niches, their womanly nature forgives even the confusing of the divine features in sinful reveries ; and for the overflow of conscience there stands in every corner the necessary brown box, whereby one's sins can be absolved.

In one such box sat a young monk of earnest mien ; the face of the lady who confessed her sins to him was concealed from me, half by her white veil, and half by the wooden side of the confessional ; nevertheless, a

hand appeared beyond this, and upon it my sight was riveted. I could not cease from looking at it. The blue veins and the distinguished polish of the white fingers were so intimately known to me, and all the dream-power of my soul woke into action in order to conceive a face that could belong to this hand.

It was a beautiful hand, not such as appertains to young girls whose hands are half lamb, half rose, but expressionless—hands that are vegetably-animalistic. Hers were much more of an inspired, of an historical beauty, such as are the hands of beautiful people who are highly bred or who have suffered greatly. And this hand also expressed somewhat of pathetic guiltlessness, it seemed as though it had no need for confession, and would not even hear what its owner confessed, but simply waited outside till she was ready. This lasted a long time, however ; the lady must have had many sins to relate.

I could wait no longer. My soul pressed an unseen parting kiss on the lovely hand, which at the same moment quivered, exactly as the hand of the dead Marie was wont to quiver when I touched it. In God's name, I thought, why is the dead Marie in 'Trient?—and I hurried out of the cathedral.

CHAPTER XVI.

As I once more crossed the market-place, the above-mentioned fruit-woman accosted me in a friendly confidential manner, as though we were old acquaintances.

A few invectives thrown at the ear are not usually the best of introductions ; but the fruit-vendor and I looked at each other so amicably, as though we had exchanged the best letters of introduction.

The woman had in no wise a bad appearance. Certainly she was already at the age when the years of service are marked with fatal wrinkles on the forehead, but in compensation she was so much the stouter, so that what she had lost of youth she had gained in weight. Her face still showed traces of great beauty, and upon it was written as upon old pots, "To love and to be loved is the greatest happiness on earth."

But what lent the greatest charm to her was the hair, the curled locks, powdered white, lavishly coated with pomade, and idyllically interwoven with white flower-bells. I examined this woman with the same attention as an antiquary examines his excavated marble torso ; I could study far more from that living human ruin. I could discover in her the traces of the Italian civilisations, Etruscan, Roman, Gothic, Lombardic, in succession up to the modern powdered head ; and it was very interesting to see the indications of these civilisations in this woman, contrasting with her trade and passionate manners. Equally interesting to me were the objects of her merchandise, the fresh almonds, which I had never previously seen in their original green husks, and the ripe fresh figs piled in heaps, as we do our pears. The great baskets of fresh lemons and oranges delighted me. And, marvellous sight ! in the basket lay a picturesque boy who held a tiny bell in his hand ; and when the great bell of the cathedral rang, he tinkled his little bell between each boom, and laughed with such infectious

happiness up to the blue heavens that the droll light-heartedness of childhood came back to me, and I stood like a child before the laughing basket, and pilfered and chatted with the fruit-woman.

On account of my broken Italian, she took me at first for an Englishman, but I confessed to her that I was only a German. She immediately asked many geographical, economical, hortological, climatical questions concerning Germany, and was astonished when I admitted to her that no lemons grow with us, that the smallest lemons are greatly prized by us when we make punch, and that in despair we pour in so much the more rum.

"Ah, my dear woman," I said to her, "in our country it is very frosty and damp; our summer is only a green-streaked winter; even the sun, with us, has to wear a flannel jacket if it does not wish to catch cold; in this yellow-flannel sunshine our fruit can never thrive, it looks uninvitingly green; and, between ourselves, the only ripe fruit that we have are roasted apples. As to figs, we have always, as with oranges and lemons, to import them from foreign countries, and during the long journey they become flat and sugary; we can procure only the worst kind fresh and at first hand, and these moreover are so bitter, that whoever gets them gratis puts in also a claim for damages. Of the almonds, we have only the swollen ones. In short, we lack all noble fruit, and we have nothing except gooseberries, pears, hazel nuts, damsons, and such like populace."

CHAPTER XVII.

I REALLY rejoiced to have made an acquaintance directly on my arrival in Italy ; and had not weighty feelings driven me towards the south, I should have remained temporarily in Trient beside the good fruit-vendor, beside the good figs and almonds, by the little baby bellringer, and—shall I confess the truth—beside the beautiful girls who streamed past me in troops. I do not know if other travellers would confirm this epithet “beautiful” ; to me, however, the Trient maidens seemed exceptionally pretty. They were just the kind that I love, and I love these pale elegiac faces, whose great black eyes radiate love and longing. I love also the dark hue of those proud necks, already beloved and kissed brown by Phœbus ; I love even those somewhat over-ripe napes, with little purple spots, as though amorous birds had pecked them ; above all, I love that superb carriage, that dumb music of the body, those limbs that move with the sweetest rhythm, voluptuous, supple, divinely languorous, indolent, but of etherial poise, and purely poetic. I love these as I love poetry itself ; and these melodiously moving figures, these wonderful human concerts that resounded about me, found an echo in my heart, and waked therein kindred tones.

It was no longer the magic influence of the first surprise, the fairy-like appearance of an utterly strange apparition ; but it was now the quiet spirit, like that of the true critic who reads a poem, that observed

these women-pictures with charmed, calm eyes. And through such observation much can be discovered—many sorrows, the richness of the past, the poverty of the present, and the ever-enduring pride.

Willingly would the daughters of Trient adorn themselves as in the days of the Council, when the town was resplendent with velvet and silk. Alas! the Council has left but little behind it; the velvet is threadbare, and the silk is frayed, and nothing remains to these poor children but shabby finery, which they anxiously save during the week, and wherewith they adorn themselves on the Sundays only. Many have even to dispense with these remnants of a vanished luxury, and are obliged to have recourse to the most ordinary and cheap fabrications of our present time.

Then results a very pathetic contrast between body and clothes; the delicately-chiselled mouth, worthy of giving princely commands, is ironically shaded by a bast hat with paper-cut flowers; the proud bosom beats under a frill of thick, clumsy lace, and the slim waist is draped with coarse cotton. O sorrow, thy name is cotton! and especially brown-striped cotton. For, ah! nothing has moved me more wofully than the sight of a Trient girl, with the figure and complexion of a marble goddess, whose noble antique body wore a dress of brown-striped cotton, so that she looked as though the stone Niobe had suddenly come to life and had disguised herself in our modern garments, and strode in proud penury and grandiose discomfort through the streets of Trient.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN I returned to the Locanda dell' Grande Europa, where I had ordered a good *pranzo* for myself, I was of so melancholy a frame of mind that I could eat nothing, and that is saying much. I sat myself down before the door of the neighbouring *botea*, refreshed myself with sorbet, and said to myself in an aside, "Wayward heart! here thou art in Italy, why *tirilirist* thou not? Is it that the old German sorrows, those little serpents burrowed deep in thee, have come to Italy with thee, and now are rejoicing so that their jubilations excite in thee this picturesque grief that stings and writhes and hisses so strangely within thee?"

But why should not the old sorrow also rejoice? Here in Italy everything is so beautiful, that even suffering itself is beautiful; sighs sound much more romantic within those old ruined marble palaces than in our conventional brick houses; it is more luxurious to weep under laurel groves than under our sullen, jagged firs; day-dreams are far sweeter beneath the ideal cloud-pictures of the deep blue Italian skies, than under the ashy grey German work-a-day heaven, where the clouds themselves picture to us nothing else than pike-bearing burghers with weary, gaping faces.

Rest quietly in my breast, ye sorrows! nowhere will you find a better habitation. You are dear and precious to me, and none knows better than I how to guard and care for you; and, I confess it, you give me pleasure. Moreover, what in reality is pleasure? Pleasure is nought else than a delicious pain.

I believe that the music, which without my notice had begun to play in front of the *bodega*, and to attract a circle of listeners, was a melodramatic accompaniment to this monologue. It was an odd trio, composed of two men and of one young girl, who played the harp. One of the former, clad in a winter coat of white sheepskin, was a burly man, with a fat, red, bandit face, that glowed from out his black hair and beard like a threatening comet; between his legs he held an enormous bass fiddle, which he attacked with as much violence as though he had overthrown an unfortunate traveller in the Abruzzi mountains, and were hastily sawing off his head. The other was a tall, haggard old man, whose decrepit legs shuffled about in a pair of worn black garments, and whose snow-white hair presented a mournful contrast to his comic songs and his foolish capers. It is sad enough when an old man is forced by sheer necessity to sell the respect due to his years, and to lay himself out to play the fool; but it is far sadder when he is obliged to do this in the presence of, or in company with, his own child.

The young girl was the daughter of the old buffoon; she accompanied the unworthy jokes of her grey-haired father on her harp, or she put her harp on one side and sang with him a comic duet, in which he took the part of an amorous old fop, and she of his coy young lover. The girl had scarcely emerged from childhood, and yet it seemed as though she had been made a woman, and not a very modest woman, before she had reached her girlhood. Hence the pallid cheeks and the drawn wistful expression of the beautiful face whose proud-set features seemed to disdain any suggestions of pity;

hence the secret sorrow of the eyes that shone so challengingly from beneath their black triumphal arches; hence the deep pathetic sounds that contrasted so strangely with the pretty laughing lips between which they emerged; hence the lassitude of the tender limbs round which a short, scanty, violet silk frock fluttered as deeply as possible. Brilliant-coloured satin ribbons garnished an antiquated straw hat. Her breast was symbolically adorned with a half-blown rosebud, which seemed to have been forced open rather than to have unfolded naturally among its green coverings. Nevertheless, over this luckless maiden, this spring already blighted by the touch of death, there lay an unexpressible charm, a grace apparent in every expression, every movement, every tone, and not destroyed even when the pantomime in which she indulged with her father was of the lowest description.

The more impudent her gestures, the more deeply was I filled with pity; and when her song rose softly and melodiously, as though imploring pardon, then the little serpents in my breast shouted exultantly and bit their tails for joy. Even the rose seemed to have a suppliant air; once even I saw it tremble and grow pale, but in the same moment the girl laughingly sent a piercing trill into the air, the old man bleated more lovingly, the red comet-face martyred his *basso* so fiercely that it uttered wildly grotesque sounds, and the audience gave clamorous applause.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was a pure Italian piece of music, out of some popular opera-bouffe, of that curious description which allows the comic vein free play, wherein it can give vent to all its droll flights, its crazy sentimentality, its laughing sorrows, and its suggestions of death which give such zest to life. It was quite after the manner of Rossini, as best illustrated by the *Barber of Seville*.

The detractors of Italian music, those who hurl condemnation also at this description, will one day in Hell be unable to escape from their richly-deserved punishment of hearing nothing but the fugues of Sebastian Bach throughout all eternity. I grieve over many of my colleagues; for example, over Rellstab, who certainly will not escape this damnation, unless he be converted to Rossini before his death. Rossini, *divino maestro*, *Helios* of Italy, who has spread thy sonorous rays throughout the world! Pardon my countrymen who blaspheme thee upon scribbling paper, and upon blotting-paper! I, however, rejoice in thy golden harmonies, thy sparkling melodies, thy mournful butterfly strains that hover round about me, and that press kisses on my heart as with the lips of the Graces! *Divino maestro*, forgive my poor countrymen who do not see thy depth, because thou hast covered it with roses. To them, thou hast not enough of thought, of substance, because thou flitest so lightly on godlike wings!

For, of a truth, in order to love, and through love to understand modern Italian music, one must have seen

the Italian people with one's own eyes, their heaven, their character, their customs, their sorrows, their joys; in short, one must know their whole history, from Romulus, who founded the holy Roman empire, to the present time, wherein it fell to pieces under Romulus Augustulus II.

Speech is forbidden to the poor Italian slave, and it is through music alone that he can give expression to the emotions of his heart. All his hatred of foreign domination, his longings for freedom, his rage at his powerlessness, his sorrow at the memory of former lordly magnificence; and, born out of these emotions, his feeble hopes, his expectant patience, his eagerness for help; all this is embodied in those melodies, wherein the most grotesque exhilaration of life merges into elegiacal peace, as in those pantomimes in which the most threatening fury is succeeded by flattering caresses.

This is the esoteric meaning of the opera-bouffe. The exoteric (and Austrian) sentinel, in whose presence they are sung and performed, would never suspect the meaning of these joyous love stories, love demonstrations, and of these love coquetries wherewith the Italian conceals his dearest thoughts of freedom, as Harmodius and Aristogiton covered their daggers with a wreath of flowers. "That is an idiotic performance, upon my soul!" says the exoteric watchman; and it is well that he discerns nothing. For otherwise the Impresario, in company with the Prima-Donna and the Primo-Uomo, would soon tread the boards—of a prison; a commission of inquiry would be established; all the trills imperilling the state; all revolutionary *floriture* would be consigned to the Protocol; a whole crowd of

harlequins, implicated in the vast ramifications of treasonable conspiracies, would be arrested; also the Tartaglia, the Brighella, and even the old circumspect Pantaloon. The papers of the doctor of Bologna would be placed under seal; he, through his stammering and stuttering, would be ranked as a dangerous suspect, and Columbine would weep her eyes red over these family misfortunes. I think, however, that those misfortunes will not overwhelm these good people yet awhile, inasmuch as the Italian demagogue is more wily than the poor Germans. These, harbouring similar ideas, disguised themselves as black fools with black fools' caps; but they appeared so outrageously mournful, and, with their extraordinary fool's leaps which they called gymnastics, they posed so dangerously and with such long serious faces, that at last the attention of the Government was aroused, and it awoke to the necessity of putting them under lock and key.

CHAPTER XX.

THE little harpist had evidently noticed that while she sang and played I had often looked at the rose on her breast, and when, later, I threw a gold piece, not by any means too small, into the plate with which she solicited a collection, she smiled slyly, and asked mysteriously if I would like to have her rose.

Now, I am the politest man in the world, and not for

the whole world would I offend a rose, even though it is a rose which has lost a little of its sweetness.

“And if,” I said to myself, “it is no longer quite fresh, and no longer in the odour of virtue—as, for example, the Rose of Sharon—what does it matter to me, since I have already a cold in my head? And it is only men, after all, who look at it so closely. The butterfly does not first ask of the rose, ‘Hast thou already been kissed by another?’ And the rose does not answer, ‘Hast thou already fluttered round another flower?’” At this point night fell, and at night, I thought, all flowers are grey, the most sinful rose and the white annunciation lily. In short, without hesitating too much, I said to the little harpist, “*Si, signora.*”

Think no evil, dear reader. It had grown dark, and the clear, pure stars looked down into my heart. In my heart itself the memory of the dead Marie vibrated. I thought once more of that night when I stood by the bed whereon the beautiful pale body lay with soft, silent lips. I remember the singular look that the old woman, whose duty was to watch by the corpse, threw at me as she confided her charge to me for several hours. I thought again of the strange scented night-violets¹ that stood on a glass on the table; and I shuddered once again as when the doubt crossed me whether it was in truth a draught of wind that extinguished the lamp—whether there had been no third being in that room?

¹ Nacht-viol = night violet (*L. Hesperis*).

CHAPTER XXI.

I WENT early to bed, and fell asleep almost immediately, and lost myself in bewildering dreams.

I dreamt myself younger by a few hours. I arrived once more in Trient; I was again astonished, only this time so much the more so inasmuch that flowers instead of men and women promenaded up and down the streets. There wandered glowing carnations, fanning themselves languorously, coquetting balsams, hyacinths with pretty, empty, pendulous heads; behind them came a group of mustachioed narcissi and chivalrous larkspurs. At a corner stood two Easter-daisies. Out of the window of one dilapidated house peeped a gilliflower, gaudily coloured, and behind her resounded the sweet-scented voice of a violet. On the balcony of the largest palace in the market-place all the nobility assembled, the highest aristocracy—namely, those lilies which neither toil nor spin, and who think themselves as beautifully arrayed as King Solomon in all his glory. I thought I also saw there the stout fruit-vendor; yet when I looked more closely it was only an old winter-ranunculus, who immediately growled out at me, “What do you want, you half-blown thistle, you sour cucumber, you vulgar flower, with only one stamen? I will water you directly!”

Seized with anxiety, I hastened into the cathedral, and almost ran over a lame old heart's-ease, who allowed her prayer-book to be carried by a little daisy. But it was really delightful in the cathedral; in the long rows sat

tulips of every colour, who bowed their heads devoutly from time to time. In the confessional sat a black radish, and before him knelt a flower, whose face was hidden from me. Nevertheless, she exhaled a perfume so weirdly familiar to me, that I shudderingly thought of the night-violets which stood in the room wherein lay the dead Marie.

As I left the cathedral I met a funeral *cortège* of walking roses, with black crape and white handkerchiefs, and, alas! on the bier lay the prematurely opened rose that I had known on the bosom of the little harpist. She seems even more pathetic, but pale as chalk, a white rose-corpse. The coffin was placed in a little chapel, nothing was heard but weeping and sighing, and at last an old poppy stepped forward and spoke a long funeral discourse, during which he chatted a great deal about the virtues of the departed one, of this earthly vale of tears, on a future life, of Faith, Hope, and Charity, all in the same nasal, sing-song voice; an oration liberally besprinkled with tears, so long-winded and dreary that from sheer weariness I awoke.

CHAPTER XXII.

My driver had outrun Phœbus in the harnessing his horses, and it was scarcely mid-day when we reached Ala. Travellers usually stop here an hour or two in order to change carriages. Ala is a veritable Italian nest. Its position is picturesque, perched on a mountain

declivity, with a stream flowing past it ; bright green vines here and there twined themselves about the patched-up beggars' palaces that lie huddled together. At one corner of the quaint old market-place, which is no larger than a poultry yard, there is written up in large imposing letters, " Piazzo di San Marco."

The inn which I entered and in which I dined was Italian in every detail. On the first floor was an open verandah overlooking the court, wherein lay old broken-down carriages and dung-heaps, where silly, red-crested turkeys and conceited, beggarly proud peacocks strutted about, while half-a-dozen tattered sunburnt ragamuffins employed themselves in a mutual search on their persons for vermin, according to the Bell-and-Lancaster method. From this verandah, along the broken iron balustrade, a large lofty chamber was reached. The floor was of marble, and in the centre stood a wide bed whereon the fleas hold their nuptial revelries ; everywhere dirt reigned supreme. The host sprang here and there in order to learn my wishes. He wore a coat of doubtful green, and a wrinkled, mobile face, in the middle of which sat a long high-arched nose with a hairy-red wart on it, like a red-jacketed monkey on the hump of a camel. He sprang here and there, and it looked as though the little monkey likewise skipped about on his nose. But nearly an hour passed before he brought me the least thing, and when I complained he protested that I already spoke very creditable Italian.

For a long time I had to content myself with the appetising smell of roast meat, wafted over to me from the doorless kitchen, where mother and daughter sat near to one another, sang, and plucked fowls. The

mother was remarkably corpulent, a bust that reared itself superabundantly, but which was yet small in comparison with the colossal hinder quarters ; so that while the first seemed to be the Institutes, the second was the Commentary enlarged into Pandects. The daughter, a not specially stout but strongly-built person, seemed likewise to incline to corpulence ; but in her budding fatness she could in no wise compare with her overblown old mother. The features of her face had no softness, no youthful attractiveness, although prettily cut, noble, antique ; hair and eyes were of glowing black. The mother, on the contrary, had indefinite snub features, a rose-red nose, blue eyes, like violets boiled in milk, and lily-white hair. Now and again the father, *il signor padre*, sprang in, and asked for some plate or utensil ; and he received, in recitative, the calm instruction to look for it himself. Then he clacked with his tongue, rummaged in the cupboards, tasted out of the pots on the fire, burnt his mouth, and sprang away again, and with him went his camel nose and the red monkey, and behind him there burst out a hearty peal of laughter, mocking, and family teasings.

But this amiable, almost idyllic scene was suddenly interrupted by a thunder-storm ; a thick-set lad with a burning, murderous looking face strode into the kitchen, and yelled out something which I did not understand. When the two women shook their heads in reply he burst out into the maddest fury, spat fire and flame like a small Vesuvius in eruption. The hostess seemed to grow anxious, and whispered some conciliatory word, which, however, produced a contrary effect. The enraged youth seized an iron shovel, smashed one or two

plates and bottles, and would have struck the poor woman had not the daughter snatched up a long kitchen knife, and threatened to stick him with it if he did not immediately desist.

It was a fine sight ! The girl stood there rigid with anger like a white marble statue, her lips pale, her eyes tense and homicidal, her forehead lined with a swollen blue vein, her uncoiled hair like black serpents, in her hand her bloody knife. I shuddered with pleasure, for I saw before me the living picture of Medea, such as I had often dreamed of her in the nights of my youth when I slept on the beloved bosom of Melpomene, the beautiful, sombre goddess !

The *signor padre* did not concern himself in the least with this scene. With officious serenity he picked up the fragments, sought out the plates which still remained intact, and brought me up soup with parmesan cheese, a roast, solid and firm as German loyalty, crayfish red as love, green spinach like hope, with eggs, and for dessert stuffed onions, which brought tears of emotion to my eyes.

"It means nothing, that is only Pietro's way," he said, when I pointed in bewilderment to the kitchen. And, in truth, when the originator of the quarrel had gone away, it seemed as though nothing had happened ; mother and daughter sat down again quietly as before, sang, and plucked the fowls.

The bill proved to me that the *signor padre* also understood the art of plucking ; and when, nevertheless, I gave him a tip, a trifle over and above the amount, he sneezed with such intense delight that the little monkey was almost precipitated off its seat. Thereupon I sent a

friendly nod over in the direction of the kitchen, and was greeted in return in a friendly manner.

Soon I was seated in a fresh carriage, and was driving rapidly over the plain of Lombardy, and towards evening I reached the ancient, world-renowned city of Verona.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE vivid impressions of the novel appearances in Trient affected me with the twilight weirdness of a fairy tale; but in Verona they impressed me as a fevered dream of the night, full of burning colours, of sharply-outlined forms, ghostly trumpet-blasts, and spectral clashing of weapons.

There was many a weather-stormed palace, which stared strangely at me as though it would fain confide an old-time secret, but shrank before the importunate turmoil of these men of the day, and prayed me to come again at nightfall. Nevertheless, in spite of the noise of the people, in spite of the fervid sun, with its outpour of red light, here and there an old dusky tower threw me a bodeful word; here and there I overheard the interwhisperings of shattered statues, and as I went up a short flight of steps, which led to the Piazza dei Signori, the stones told me a terrible bloody history, and I read at the corner the words *Scala Ammazziati*.

Verona, the ancient, the world-renowned city, situated on both sides of the Etsch, was almost always the first

station of German wanderers who quitted their cold northern woods and climbed over the Alps in order to bask in the golden sunshine of lovely Italy. A few pushed their way further, others found that the spot was wholly good. They surrounded themselves there with homelike comforts, they clad themselves with silken garments, and throve peacefully among the flowers and cypresses, until new arrivals, still wearing their cold, iron clothing, came from out the north and dispossessed them—a tale which oftentimes repeated itself, and is called by historians the Invasions of the Barbarians.

A stroll through the precincts of Verona reveals many a romantic trace of those days, and also traces of yet older and of later times. To the Romans belong especially the Amphitheatre and the Arch of Triumph; to the era of Theodarich, of Dietrichs of Berne, date the fabulous remains of much Byzantine pre-Gothic architecture; fantastic ruins recall the King Alboin and his mad Longobards; ancient monuments carry us back to Charlemagne, whose paladins are carved on the door of the cathedral with the frank coarseness which characterised them in life. It would seem as though the city were a great hostelry of people. And, as in inns, men write their names on the walls and windows, so here have each of these nations left behind it the traces of its passage. Often not in the most legible writing, truly, for many of the Germanic races knew not how to write, and in default had recourse to destruction in order to leave a memorial of themselves. And it was amply sufficient, for such ruins speak more clearly than the most finely drawn letters. The barbarians who nowadays possess

the ancient hostelry do not fail to leave behind them similar monuments of their amiable presence, for they possess neither sculptor nor poet who could by milder methods recommend them to the memory of posterity.

I remained only one day in Verona, in continual admiration of these marvels. I stood entranced, now before some ancient edifice, now before the men who streamed by in mysterious haste, and finally before the divinely blue heaven, which lightened the whole scene like a costly frame to a beautiful picture. But it is curious to be oneself in the picture that one has been studying, to see the figures now and again smile at one, especially the women, as happened pleasantly to me on the Piazza delle Erbe. In it, where the vegetable market is held, moved a crowd of picturesque figures, women and maidens, faces with languishing great eyes, graceful, supple limbs, of a lovely yellow colour, naïvely dirty, created rather for the night than for the day. The black or white veil which the women of the town wear on their head is so deftly thrown across the bosom that it reveals rather than conceals the beautiful forms. The servant girls wore chignons, through which was thrust one or more golden arrows, or else a silver-hilted dagger. Most of the peasant women wore little plate-shaped straw hats, with coquettish flowers, jauntily placed on one side of the head. The men's clothes were less unlike our own, and only the huge black whiskers growing bushily over the cravat, which I saw here for the first time, surprised me somewhat.

A close observation of these people, men and women alike, reveal in their faces and in their whole beings the

traces of a civilisation which differs from our own in as much as it is not the product of the barbarism of the Middle Ages, but of the Roman era; a civilisation which has not perished, but has merely been modified by the character of the successive masters of the country.

Among these people civilisation has not the remarkably new polish that it has with us, where the oak trunks were planed but yesterday, and where everything still smells of varnish. It appears to us as if all this swarm of people in the Piazza delle Erbe have, during the course of time, altered the cut of their coats and the methods of their speech but very gradually, and that the spirit of their refined customs and habits has remained almost unaltered. The buildings, however, which surround the Piazza, could not so easily keep pace with Time; but they are none the worse for that, and their aspect moves the soul in a strange way. There, also, stand high palaces of the Lombardo Venetian style, with innumerable balconies and smiling frescoes. In the centre rises a single memorial column, a sparkling fountain, and a stone saint. Here, ranged behind a massive pillared door, is the comically red and white striped Podesta; yonder appears an old square church tower, whereon the hands and dial of the clock are destroyed as though Time wished to annihilate itself. The whole place is permeated by the same romantic magic which so enthralls us in the fantastic imaginings of Ludovico Ariosto, or of Ludovico Tieck.

Near to the Piazza stands a house reputed to be the palace of the Capulets, on account of the hat which is sculptured in stone above the inner door. It is now a dirty inn for tramps and carters; and before it a metal

hat, painted red and riddled with holes, hangs as a sign. In a church not far from it is a chapel, wherein, according to the legend, the luckless lovers were united. A poet visits such spots willingly, even though he may laugh at himself for the credulity of his heart. I found a solitary woman in this chapel, a pallid, sorrowful creature who, after having knelt a long time in prayer, rose with sighs, looked at me with surprise out of her sick, quiet eyes, and at last tottered out on feeble limbs.

The tombs of the Scaligers are also close to the Piazza delle Erbe. They are as wonderfully beautiful as the proud race itself, and it is a pity that they are crowded together in a narrow corner in order to take up as little space as possible, and where there is hardly remaining room for the spectator to study them conveniently. It is as though we here saw the embodied historical representatives of this race, which occupied only a small place in the general history of Italy; yet this corner is crammed full of stirring deeds, of high-wrought sentiments, and of lordly magnificence. As in history, so also here they are seen on their monuments, as proud knights of iron on iron horses—pre-eminently, Can Grande the uncle, and Mastino the nephew.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MUCH has been said concerning the Amphitheatre of Verona. It affords ample space for observation, and there are no contemplations which cannot enter into the area of this celebrated edifice. It is built entirely in that

serious, direct style, whose beauty consists in perfect solidity, and, together with all the public buildings of the Romans, is the expression of a spirit which is no other than the spirit of Rome itself. And Rome? Who is so wholly ignorant that this name does not create a homelike yearning in his heart, does not at least arouse a traditional awe in his mind? For myself, I admit that more disquietude than pleasure coloured my emotions when I thought that before long I should tread the soil of ancient Rome. "The old Rome is indeed dead," I reassured my trembling soul, "and thou wilt have the joy of gazing upon its beautiful body without the slightest danger." "But what if she were not quite dead yet," reiterated the Falstaffian idea in me, "and were only dissembling, and if she were suddenly to rise again—it would be terrible!"

When I visited the Amphitheatre a comedy was being performed in it. In the centre a little wooden stage had been erected, on which an Italian farce was being played, and the spectators sat under the open skies, some on little stools, some on the high stone seats of the old Amphitheatre. There I also settled myself and watched the adventures of Brighella and Tartaglia from the spot on which the Romans sat and looked at their gladiatorial shows and combats of wild beasts. The heaven above me, that blue crystal dome, was alone unchanged. The twilight deepened gradually, and the stars shone out. Trufaldino smiled, Smeraldina lamented, and finally Pantaloon appeared and joined their hands. The people clapped approval and streamed away in high contentment. The whole play had not cost one drop of blood; but it was only a play after all. The games of

the Romans, on the contrary, were no games. These men could never amuse themselves with mere semblance, they lacked the requisite childlike joyfulness of soul, and, being of serious nature, they played their games in that same rough, sanguinary spirit of seriousness. They were not great men, but from their position they were greater than any other children of earth, for their standing place was Rome. Whenever they stepped down from their seven hills they were little. Hence the littleness which we discover wherever their private life expresses itself; and Herculaneum and Pompeii, those palimpsests of nature, where to-day the old stone texts are being dug up again, show to the traveller the Roman private life in the little houses with tiny rooms, that so strikingly contrast with those colossal buildings which expressed their public life—those theatres, aqueducts, fountains, roads, bridges, whose ruins still excite our wonder. But there lies the point; just as the Greek is great through the idea of Art, the Hebrew through the idea of a holy God, so the Romans are great through their idea of their eternal Rome, supremely great when they fought, wrote, and built under the inspiration of that idea. The greater Rome became, the more the idea expanded; the individual was lost therein, and the great men were prominent only by reason of this idea; and thus the littleness of the little is rendered still more remarkable. The Romans were, in consequence, the greatest of heroes and the greatest of satirists; heroes, when in action they thought of Rome, and satirists, when they thought of Rome while judging the actions of their contemporaries.

Compared with so gigantic a conception as the Idea of Rome, the greatest individuality would appear puny, and

a fair prey for mockery. Tacitus is the cruellest master of such satire, just because he felt most deeply the greatness of Rome and the littleness of men. He is wholly in his element every time that he reports the gossip of the Forum over some imperial scandal ; and he is cynically jubilant when he can recount some sensational mischance, some unsuccessful sycophantry.

I lingered awhile walking round the highest seats of the Amphitheatre, mentally reviving the past. As all buildings reveal their spirit most clearly in the evening light, so did these walls speak to me of profoundest things, in their fragmentary, lapidarie style. They spoke to me of the men of old Rome, and it seemed to me as though I saw those very men, pale shades wandering in the dusk-veiled circus beneath me. I seemed to see the Gracchi, with their ecstatic, martyr-eyes.

"Tiberius Sempronius," I called aloud, "I will vote with thee for the Agrarian law!" And Cæsar also I saw ; arm-in-arm he wandered with Marcus Brutus. I asked, "Are you reconciled?"

"We believe we were both in the right," laughed Cæsar back to me. "I knew not that there existed a second Roman, and I, therefore, thought myself justified in putting Rome in my pocket. And, because this Roman was, in truth, my son Marcus, he thought himself justified in killing me!"

Behind these two slid Tiberius Nero, with nebulous legs and uncertain mien. Women, also, wandered there; among them Agrippina, with her beautiful, masterful face. She was wonderfully touching to look upon, like an ancient statue in whose features grief is petrified.

“Whom seekest thou, daughter of Germanicus?”

Her plaintive voice just reached me, when there rang out suddenly the unwelcome sounds of a vesper bell, and the rattle of the recall drum. The proud Roman spirit vanished, and I found myself once more in the Christian, Austrian present.

CHAPTER XXV.

As soon as daylight wanes, all the gay world of Verona promenades in the Piazza La Bra, or sits on low seats before the *cafés* sipping sorbett, and enjoying the music and the coolness of the evening. It is restful to sit there; the dreaming heart rocks itself upon the dulcet tones and echoes a response. Often, when the trumpets ring out, it starts from its drowsy reverie, and chimes in with the full orchestra. Then is the spirit awakened as by a ray of sunshire, rich flowering emotions and remembrances with deep black eyes bloom afresh, and thoughts soar above them like cloud-drifts, proud, slow-moving, eternal.

Until long after midnight I wandered about the streets of Verona, which little by little became deserted and gave back strange echoes. The crescent moon bathed the buildings and statues in a weird twilight, and many a marble face looked at me, wan and pale. I hurried rapidly past the tomb of the Scaligers, for it seemed to me as though Can Grande, amiably disposed as he always was to poets, wished to dismount from his horse and to accompany me as guide.

"Remain seated," I cried to him, "I have no need of thee. My heart is the best *Cicerone*, and it everywhere tells me the histories which took place in these palaces, and, saving name and dates, it tells me truly enough."

As I reached the Roman triumphal arch a black monk passed hastily through it, and from the further side resounded the growling of a German voice, "Who goes there?" "A friend," shrilled back a pleasant treble voice.

But to whom did that woman's voice belong which pierced my soul with such mysterious sweetness as I went up the *Scala Ammazziati*? It was a song such as issues from the breast of a dying nightingale, echoing from the walls of the stone houses with pathetic sweetness, as though pleading for help.

This was the spot on which Antonio della Scala murdered his brother, who was on his way to visit his loved one. My heart told me that she still sits in her room awaiting her beloved, and that she sings solely to stifle her unquiet presentiments. But soon voice and song seemed well known to me. I had of old heard these soft, trembling, languid tones; they wound around me like soft fleeting memories, and "O thou foolish heart," I said to myself, "dost thou no longer recognise the song of the sick Moorish king that the dead Marie has so often sung to thee? And the voice itself, dost thou no longer recognise the voice of the dead Marie?"

These lingering tones followed me through all the streets as far as the inn of the *Due Torre*, through my sleeping chamber, into my dreams. And there I saw again my gentle dead love lying lifeless and beautiful;

once more the old watcher slunk away with mysterious side-looks, the night-violet diffused its perfume, I kissed anew the lovely lips, and the beloved form raised itself slowly to kiss me in return.

If only I knew who extinguished the torch!

CHAPTER XXVI.

“KNOW’ST thou the land where the citron blooms?”

Do you know that song? The whole of Italy is pictured therein, but with the sighing colours of longing. In his *Italian Travels* Goethe sang it more at length; and when he paints he has always the original before his eyes, and he can be relied upon for truth of outline and of colour. I, therefore, find it satisfactory to rely for once upon Goethe’s *Italian Travels*, the more so that he made this same tour through the Tyrol to Verona. I had already previously spoken of this book¹ before I was acquainted with the subject which he handled. And I now find my anticipatory criticisms fully verified. In fact we realise that it is the result of direct perception, and that it is permeated throughout with the tranquillity of nature.

Goethe holds a mirror up to nature, or, to state it more correctly, he is himself the mirror. Nature longed to know herself, and she created Goethe. He has been empowered to mirror for us the very thoughts and intentions of nature. It must not be taken amiss,

¹ *Reisebilder*, vol. i.

especially in the dog-days, if a very ardent Goetheite marvels so greatly at the identity of the mirror with the things reflected, that he credits the former with creative powers, the power of actual re-creation.

A Herr Eckerman once wrote a book about Goethe, in which he asserted quite solemnly: "Had the good God at the creation of the world said to Goethe, 'Dear Goethe, I am, God be praised, now ready: I have created everything except birds and trees, and you will render me a service of love if you yourself will create these trifles.' Then Goethe, just as well as the good God, would have created these animals and these plants entirely in harmony with the rest of creation—that is to say, birds with feathers, and trees with their greenery."

Some truth lies in these words, and I am indeed of opinion that Goethe would occasionally have managed his part better than the good God himself; for instance, he would have created Herr Eckerman much more completely—that is to say, with feathers and verdure. It is really a flaw in creation that green feathers did not grow out of the head of Herr Eckerman; Goethe has at least sought to remedy this defect, for he prescribed for him a doctor's hat at Jena, and planted it on his head with his own hand.

Next to Goethe's *Italian Travels* rank Lady Morgan's *Italy* and Madame de Stäel's *Corinne*. What these women lack in talent, in order not to appear insignificant side by side with Goethe, they make up for with manly sentiments, which he lacks. For Lady Morgan has spoken like a man. Her words were scorpions in the hearts of insolent mercenaries; and the trills of this fluttering nightingale of Freedom were sweet and stirring. So like-

wise, as every one knows, Madame de Stäel was an incomparable *vivandière* in the camp of the Liberals, and ran courageously through the ranks of the combatants, strengthening the weary with draughts from her flask of enthusiasm. She herself fought, moreover, better than best.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

KNOW'ST thou the land where the citron blooms?

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Yès, but do not travel there in the beginning of August, when the sun roasts you by day and fleas eat you by night. I also advise you, dear reader, not to travel from Verona to Milan by *diligence*.

I started in company with six brigands in a lumbering coach, which, on account of the overpowering dust, was so carefully shut on all sides that I could observe but very little of the beauty of the country. Twice, only, before we reached Brescia did my neighbour lift the silk blind in order to spit. The first time I saw nothing but a few perspiring fir-trees, which in their dark winter habiliments seemed to suffer greatly from the heat of this sultry sun; the second time I caught a glimpse of

the corner of a wonderfully translucent blue lake, in which were mirrored the sun and a lanky grenadier. This man, an Austrian Narcissus, was admiring, with childish joy, the fidelity of his reflection whenever he shouldered or presented arms, or when he took aim to fire.

I have little to relate about Brescia, for I employed the time of our halt there in eating a good dinner. A poor traveller cannot be blamed if he appease the hunger of his body before that of his soul. Nevertheless, I was sufficiently conscientious before remounting the coach to ask a chamber-maid for some particulars concerning Brescia, and I learned among other things that the town has 40,000 inhabitants, a town-hall, 21 coffee-houses, 20 Catholic churches, a custom-house, a synagogue, a menagerie, a house of correction, a hospital, a poor theatre, and a gallows for thieves who steal less than 100,000 thalers.

I arrived in Milan at midnight, and drove to Herr Reichmann's, a German who has ordered his hotel in accordance with German ways. It is the best inn in Italy I was told by some acquaintances whom I met there, and who descanted incessantly on Italian fleas and inns. I heard nothing but tiresome stories of Italian cheating, and Sir William, especially, cursed and swore that if Europe is the head of the world, so is Italy at the head of the organisation of thieves. The poor baronet had been obliged to pay not less than twelve francs for a meagre breakfast at the Locanda Croce Bianca, in Padua, and at Vicenza a tip had been demanded from him for picking up his glove which he had dropped in getting into the carriage. His cousin Tom

said that all Italians are rogues, with the single reservation that they do not steal. Had he looked with more amiable eyes, he would also have made the observation that all Italian women are rogues. The third member of the party was a Mr. Liver, a young calf whom I had known in Brighton, but whom I found again at Milan a *boeuf à la mode*. He was a thorough dandy in dress, and I never knew a man who knew better how to make angles with every part of his body. When he struck his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, he made angles with his wrists and with each of his fingers; his mouth, even, opened to a square; added to which he had an angular head, narrow behind, pointed in front, with a low forehead and a long chin. Among the English acquaintances I found at Milan was Liver's stout aunt, who had recently come down from the Alps like an avalanche of fat, accompanied by two snow-white northern goslings, cold as snow, Miss Molly and Miss Polly.

Do not accuse me of Anglo-mania, dear reader, if I speak very often of the English in this book. They are nowadays too numerous in Italy to be overlooked. They stream through the land in great swarms. They camp at all the inns; they run about everywhere, so that it is no longer possible to think of Italian citron trees without an English woman who inhales its perfumes, or of a gallery without a batch of English, who, guide-book in hand, roam about in order to satisfy themselves that everything that is specified in their book as noteworthy is hanging there. The sight of those fair, red-cheeked people, driving over the Alps well groomed and inquisitive, and wandering through Italy with their varnished carriages,

smart lacqueys, neighing riding horses, their green-veiled lady's maids, and their other costly appurtenances, gives the impression of an elegant invasion of barbarians. And in truth the son of Albion, although he wears white linen and pays ready money, is but a civilised barbarian in comparison with the Italian, who represents a civilisation that is, on the contrary, merging into barbarism. The one displays in his manners a conceited rawness, the other an evaporating refinement. And even the pale Italian faces—with suffering in the white of their eyes, and lips of a marked tenderness—what an air of subtle distinction they present beside the formal British faces, ruddy with rude health! The whole Italian people is inwardly sick. Sick men have always greater attractiveness than those who are healthy; for only the sick man is a man; his limbs express a history of suffering. I once saw a dying dog, who in its death agonies looked at me with an almost human expression.

The suffering expression of the face of the Italians is especially noticeable when they are spoken to concerning the misfortunes of their country; and in Milan many occasions of this sort occurred. That is the most galling wound in the breast of the Italians; and they give a convulsive start if it is touched, however lightly. They then give a certain shrug of the shoulders which fills you with pity.

One of my Britons believed the Italians to be indifferent to politics, because they seemed to listen with indifference when we strangers talked politics about the Catholic emancipation and the Turkish war; and he was unjust enough to express himself ironically thereon while sitting opposite to one of these pale Italians with a black beard.

We had been, the previous evening, to hear a new opera performed in La Scala, and noted the tumultuous applause which takes place on such occasions.

"You Italians," said the ruddy one to the pale man, "appear dead to everything except to music, which has still the power of inspiring you."

"You do us an injustice," said the pale one, and he shrugged his shoulders.

"Alas," he sighed, "Italy sits elegiacally dreaming over her ruins. If she sometimes is suddenly aroused by the melody of a song, and springs upwards stormily, this enthusiasm is due not so much to the song as to memories and emotions which the song awakens, and the Italian carries ever pent up in his breast, wherein they spring up with turbulence—and that is the reason of the mad commotion which you heard at La Scala."

Perhaps this avowal affords a key to the enthusiasm which the operas of Rossini and Meyerbeer evoke everywhere on the other side of the Alps.

If I have ever seen human madness, it was certainly during a performance of *Crociato in Egitto*, when the music now and again from soft mournful tones suddenly burst into loud-voiced pain. Such madness is called in Italy—*Furore*.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ALTHOUGH the present moment, dear reader, would, by a reference to the Brera and Ambrosiana, afford me an opportunity of regaling you with my opinions upon art,

I will not offer you these, but will content myself with the remark that I saw in the streets of Milan many of the beautiful Lombard women with the pointed chin which gives a touch of sentimentality to the pictures of the Lombardian school of painting.

It has always been exceedingly instructive to me when I have been able to compare the works of a school with the originals which have served them as models; I can then comprehend more clearly the character of the school. Thus the Kermis at Rotterdam suddenly made Jan Steen, with his godlike hilarity, intelligible to me. In like manner I learned on the Lung-Arno to understand the capable spirit of the Florentine, which expressed itself in truth of form; and on the Piazz di San Marco the truth of colour and the dreamy superficiality of the Venetians. Go to Rome, dear soul, and there, perhaps, thou wilt soar to the contemplation of the Ideal and to the conceptions of a Raphael.

Meanwhile, there is one marvel in Milan, the greatest in every respect, which I cannot pass over in silence—is the cathedral. From the distance it appears as though it were cut out of white writing paper; a nearer approach proves that, to one's amazement, it is unmistakably carved out of marble. The innumerable statues of saints which cover the entire edifice, everywhere peeping out of the little Gothic niches, and standing on the extreme point of the pinnacles—all these stone people are a bewilderment to the mind. A more lengthy observation reveals the whole work as very beautiful, as of colossal daintiness, a veritable plaything for the children of giants. At midnight, in full moonshine, it has the most beautiful aspect. Then, all the white stone mannikins step

down from their crowded heights, and walk about the Piazza with you, and whisper old-world stories in your ear, droll and saintly stories, secret tales about Galeazzo Visconti, who caused the cathedral to be commenced, and of Napoleon Bonaparte, who continued it long after.

"Look you," said a weird saint, who in latter days was carved out of the newest marble, "look you, my ancient comrades cannot understand why the Emperor Napoleon carried on the building so ardently. But I know why very well: he foresaw that this great stone house would in any case be a very useful edifice, even in event of Christianity passing away."

In event of Christianity passing away! I was shocked when I heard that there were saints in Italy who could give voice to such a speech, and moreover in such a place, where Austrian sentries paced up and down with bear-skin caps and knapsacks. Nevertheless, the stone oddity is right; the interior of the cathedral is delightfully cool in summer, bright and pleasant, and would certainly retain its worth even under a change of destiny.

The completion of the cathedral was one of Napoleon's pet hobbies, and he was not far from its fulfilment when his power was broken. The Austrians are now finishing the work. They are also continuing the erection of the famous arch of triumph which will be a gateway to the Simplton Pass. Naturally, Napoleon's statue will not crown the top of the arch, as originally planned. What matters! the great Emperor has left behind him a better memorial, better and more enduring than marble, and from which no Austrian can draw away our gaze. When we others shall have long been laid low by the scythe of Time, and shall have been winnowed away like the chaff

of the fields, that memorial will still remain intact. New races will have grown out of the earth; and Time, powerless to destroy so mighty a creation, will seek to envelop it in a mist of legends, and his marvellous story will at last become a myth. Perhaps, after the lapse of centuries, an ingenious schoolmaster will irrefutably prove in a learned dissertation, that Napoleon Bonaparte is identical with that other Titan who robbed the gods of light, and who for this fault was chained to a rock in the middle of the oceans, to be the prey of a vulture who daily lacerated his heart.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I BEG of you, dear reader, not to rank me absolutely as a Bonapartist; my allegiance is not accorded to the actions, but to the genius of the man, whether the man be called Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon. My unqualified admiration is given to Napoleon only until the eighteenth Brumaire—on that day he betrayed Freedom. And he did it, not from necessity, but out of a secret predilection for the aristocracy. Napoleon Bonaparte was an aristocrat, a noble enemy of burgher-like equality. It was a colossal misunderstanding that the European aristocracy, represented by England, waged such mortal war against him; for although he had undertaken to bring about a change in the *personnel* of this aristocracy, he would, nevertheless, have preserved the greater part intact with their special principles, he would have regenerated this

aristocracy ; instead of which it now lies abased through feebleness of age, loss of blood, and exhaustion, resulting from its last, certainly its very last, victory.

Dear reader, we will here, once for all, come to an understanding. I do not admire the act, the deed—I admire only the human spirit ; the act, the deed, is only its vesture, and history is nothing else than the old wardrobe of the human spirit. Yet Love is sometimes enamoured of ancient garments, and thus it is that I love the cloak of Marengo.

“We are on the battlefield of Marengo !” How my heart leapt with joy when the postillion uttered these words ! I had quitted Milan in the evening in company with a very agreeable Livonian who rather aped the Russian, and the following morning I saw the sun rise over the celebrated battlefield. Here it was that General Bonaparte drank so deep a draught from the cup of glory, that in the fumes thereof he became Consul, Emperor, conqueror of the world, and could only emerge therefrom at St. Helena. It did not fare much better with us ; we shared the intoxicated and dreamed the same dreams, we were similarly awakened, and in the desolation of sobriety we made all kind of wise reflections.

It has seemed to us from time to time as though the glory of war were an antiquated pleasure, as though war were merely of importance to nobles, and that Napoleon is perhaps the last conqueror. Symptoms now point to the possibility that spiritual, instead of material, interests may be fought over ; that the history of the world may no longer be a history of robbery, but a history of mind.

The chief lever, which ambitious and covetous princes knew how to wield so efficaciously for their private aims,

namely, nationality, with its vanities and its hatreds, is now rotten and worn out; these foolish national prejudices dwindle daily away; all rugged idiosyncrasies disappear under the levelling tendencies of European civilisation. Nations no longer exist in Europe, only parties; and it is an instructive sight to see how these parties instantly recognise one another in spite of their manifold colourings, and understand each other in spite of their difference of speech. Just as there existed material State politics, so now also there exists spiritual party politics. And it is with State politics as with the most insignificant war, which, if it break out between two unimportant powers, immediately grows to a general European conflict wherein all the States of more or less ambition, or in any case with interests, must join. So likewise, in the world, the slightest strife cannot occur without the general spiritual importance being immediately perceived by means of those party politics, or without the most remote and heterogeneous parties being constrained to take sides for or against.

By virtue of these party politics, which I call spiritual politics on account of their spiritual interests, and because their *ultimæ rationes* are not of metal, two great masses are constituting themselves, even in the very heart of State politics. They stand in hostile attitude opposite to one another, and fight with words and looks. The watchwords and representatives of these two great parties change daily; confusion is imminent. Often the direst misunderstandings arise, and are intensified rather than lessened by those diplomats of spiritual politics, the authors. Nevertheless, even if heads err, hearts feel none the less keenly what they desire,

and Time marches steadily on in fulfilment of its great task.

And what is this great task of the day?

It is emancipation. Not simply that of the Irish, Greek, Frankfort Jews, West Indian blacks, and all such oppressed people, but the emancipation of the whole world, and especially of Europe, which is come of age and is tearing itself away from the iron leading-strings of the privileged class of the aristocracy. Certain philosophical renegades of freedom may possibly forge chains of syllogisms to prove to us that millions of men are created in order to serve as beasts of burden to a few thousand privileged knights; they cannot however convince us until they can prove, as Voltaire said, that those came into the world with saddles on their backs, and these with spurs on their feet.

Every age has its task, and through the accomplishment thereof mankind advances. The early inequality which was imposed upon Europe by means of Feudalism was perhaps necessary, or, at all events, was a necessary condition of the progress of civilisation; to-day it is a hindrance, and revolts civilised hearts. The French, who are the most social people, have of necessity felt most bitterly this inequality, which collided unbearably with the principles of socialism; they have essayed to enforce equality by cutting off the heads of those who aspired to rise above their fellows, and the Revolution was a signal for the war of liberation of humanity.

All honour to the French! they strove for the two great necessities of human society, for good food and for civil equality. They have made the greatest strides in the art of cooking and in liberty; and if ever we, as equal

guests, celebrate the banquet of reconciliation, and be of good cheer—for what better could be imagined than a society of equals seated at a well-set table?—then we will drink the first toast to the French. Naturally, some time must elapse before this feast can be held, ere the emancipation can be accomplished; but the time will come at last, and we shall sit at the same table, reconciled and equals. We shall then be united, and shall war together against other world-evils, perhaps at last against death itself—whose rigid system of equality at least does not insult us so much as the smiling doctrines of the inequality of the aristocracy.

Do not smile, my future reader. Each century believes its fight to be weightier than that of all others preceding it. This is a faith proper to the century, in which it lives and dies. And we also desire to live and die in this religion of liberty, which perhaps deserves the name of religion more than the hollow and exhausted soul-spectre which we still so name from habit. Our holy war seems to us the weightiest of all that have hitherto been waged upon this earth, notwithstanding that historical forecasts tell us that, at a future date, our grandchildren will view this struggle with the same feelings of indifference where-with we review the struggles of primitive man, who had to fight against greedy monsters, dragons, and giants.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON the battlefield of Marengo reflections crowd in upon the mind to such an extent that one is tempted to believe

that they are those which so many men were suddenly forced to relinquish with their lives, and which now wander about those plains like ownerless dogs. Battle-fields have a great fascination for me ; for, terrible as war is, it nevertheless testifies to the intellectual greatness of man, who is able to challenge his most powerful hereditary enemy, Death.

And I like this battlefield in particular, for here liberty danced its voluptuous bridal dance on roses of blood. France was then the bridegroom who had invited the whole world to his wedding, and as the song says—

“ Ho there ! on the bridal eve
Men broke, instead of pots
The heads of the aristocracy.”

But alas, every inch that man acquires costs streams of blood. And is not the price too dear? Is not the life of the individual of perhaps as much value as that of the whole race? For each particular man is in himself a world, which lives and dies with him, and under every gravestone there lies the history of a world. . . . Silence ! so would the dead speak who have fallen in this place ; but we still live, and must fight the holy war of deliverance of mankind.

“ But who thinks of Marengo now ? ” said my travelling companion, the Livonian Russian. “ All eyes are turned now towards the Balkans, where my countryman Diebitsch sends the turbans of the Turks to the right-about, and this year we shall take Constantinople. Are you a good Russian ? ”

That was a question which I would have rather answered anywhere else than on the battlefield of

Marengo. In the mists of the morning I saw the man with the three-cornered hat and the grey military cloak ; he flitted through it with the ghostlike rapidity of a thought, and out of the distance there rang with tragic sweetness, "Allons, enfants de la patrie." And there-upon I answered, "Yes, I am a good Russian."

And in truth, through the marvellous change of watch-word and of representatives in the great conflict, it has come to pass that the ardent friend of Revolution sees in the throne of Russia the salvation of the world, and in the Emperor Nicholas the Champion of Freedom. Singular change ! two years previously we clothed an English minister with this dignity. The clamorous howlings of bitter hatred against George Canning directed our choice. In the viperish, ignoble mortifications which he endured we recognised the guarantee of his fidelity, and when he died his martyr's death, we built our hopes upon it, and the eighth of August became a saint's day in the calendar of Freedom. But we have taken the standard from Downing Street and have planted it in St. Petersburg, and have chosen as its bearer the Emperor Nicholas, the Knight of Europe, who has won his spurs in such good fights, the protector of Greek widows and orphans against Asiatic barbarians. The enemies of Freedom have again betrayed themselves, and through the acumen of their hatred we learn to recognise our own best adherents. The usual occurrence has again taken place : we have to thank the majority of our enemies, rather than our own choice, for our representative ; we observe the while the wonderful complex community pouring forth their pious wishes to Heaven for the safety of Turkey and the destruction of Russia ; thus we readily

note which is our friend, which our deadly enemy. How the good God must laugh in heaven when he hears Wellington, the little Corporal, the Pope, Rothschild, Metternich, and a whole chorus of knightlings, stockjobbers, pastors, and Turks praying at the same time for the safety of the Crescent !

That which the Alarmists fear concerning the danger we run from the oversize of Russia, is foolish. We Germans, at least, have nothing to risk : a little thralldom, more or less, which should make no difference to us where there is the highest to win—namely, the deliverance from the remains of feudalism and clericalism. They say we are threatened with the lordship of the knout, but I will readily suffer it a little, providing I know for a certainty that our enemy is getting it also. I wager, however, they would, as they have always done, fawn upon the new power, smile graciously and offer themselves to perform the most shameful service ; and would bargain, when it became necessary that they should be knouted, for the privilege of a knout of honour. So it is with the noble of Siam, who, when he is about to be punished, is wrapped in a silken robe, and is beaten with perfumed sticks, while the culpable burgher receives a linen wrap and no such fragrant cudgel. Now, we will not grudge them this single privilege, providing they receive a cudgelling, and especially if it be the English nobility. For it must be zealously borne in mind that it was just that nobility which wrested the Magna Charta from despotism, and that it was England, who, by her maintenance of the burgher-like class-inequality, ensured individual freedom ; that England was the place of refuge for free minds at a time when despotism oppressed the whole Continent. Those

are *tempi passati*! England and her aristocracy is now falling to bits, free minds have a still better place of refuge in time of need. Were the whole of Europe one prison, there is yet one hope of escape—that is America, and, God be praised! that hole is larger than the prison itself.

But these are all laughable conceits. When England is put in unbiassed comparison with Russia, the inquirer can remain in no doubt which party to side with. In England freedom has grown out of historical events, in Russia out of principles. As with those events themselves, so do their spiritual results bear the impress of the Middle Ages; the whole of England is petrified in sapless mediæval institutions, behind which the aristocracy intrench themselves and await war. Those principles, however, out of which Russian freedom has emerged, and which daily expand wider, are the Liberal ideas of our new Time. The Russian government is saturated with these new ideas; its unlimited absolutism is more of the nature of a dictatorship, in order that those ideas may penetrate into daily life. This government has not its roots in feudalism and clericalism; it is in direct opposition to the power of the nobles and of the church; and the Russian noble is created through State service. Russia is a democratic state, I might also call it a Christian state, if I were to employ this often misused word in its sweetest and more burgher, world-wide term; for the Russians are already, throughout the length and breadth of their kingdom, emancipating themselves from the narrow-mindedness of heathen national influences. They are cosmopolitan, or at least a sixth part cosmopolitan, for Russia comprises almost the sixth part of the inhabited globe.

And, truly, when a German-russ, such as my Livonian travelling companion, indulges in patriotic swagger, and talks of our Russia and our Diebitsch, it is as though I heard a herring claim the world's ocean as his fatherland, and the whale for his compatriot.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"I AM a good Russian"—I said on the battlefield of Marengo. Out of a colossal mass of clouds, piled into a triumphal arch, the sun rose victorious, brilliant and serene, presaging a lovely day. I felt, however, like the poor moon, which still hung pallid in the heaven. She had wandered her lonely way through the air in the solitude of the night, when happiness sleeps, and ghosts, owls, and crime stalk abroad; and now that the young day had risen with joyous beams and palpitating morning glow, she could not stay; and she vanished like a mist cloud.

"It will be a lovely day," called out my companion.

"Yes, it will be a lovely day," my beating heart re-echoed softly, and trembled with joy and sorrow. Yes, it will be a beautiful day; the sun of freedom will warm the earth more joyously than the whole aristocracy of nocturnal stars. A new race will spring up, engendered from the embrace of free choice, and not of forced nuptials, or under the control of ecclesiastical toll-gatherers. With freer birth there will come into the world freer thoughts and feelings, of which we, born in

servitude, have no idea. Ah! they will have no suspicion of how terrible the night was, in whose darkness we have to live; how grimly we had to fight with hated ghosts, stupid owls, and sanctimonious sinners. Ah! we poor combatants, who have to squander our lives in such warfare, and are weary and spent now that the day of victory shines forth. The glow of the sunrise can no longer redden our cheeks or warm our hearts; we die therein like the waning moon. All too short is man's allotted course, whose end is the inexorable grave.

I really do not know if I shall have merited the placing of a laurel wreath upon my bier. Poetry, howsoever deeply I may have loved it, has always been to me only a holy plaything, or, at most, the consecrated means to a heavenly aim. I have never laid great store on the glory of poetical fame, and whether my song is praised or blamed, it matters little to me. But a sword should be laid on my bier, for I have been a steadfast soldier in the war of liberation of humanity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WE sought shelter from the midday heat in a Franciscan monastery that lay upon a prominent height, and, with its dusky cypresses and white monks, looked like a religious hunting-seat in the bright green valley of the Apennines. It was a beautiful building; and after the Chartreuse of Monza, which I saw only from the outside, I have visited many other very remarkable churches and

monasteries. I have often not known whether most to admire the beauty of the country, the grandeur of the edifice, or the equally grand, equally solid feelings of their constructors. These foresaw clearly that the completion of such edifices would be reserved for their great-grandnephews; yet they laid the first stone in perfect tranquillity, and built stone upon stone until death tore them from their work. Other architects continued the work, and found in the end a similar repose—in an unwavering credence in the eternity of the Catholic religion, and in an equal confidence that future generations would hold the same belief, and would continue to build after the example of their predecessors.

It was the faith of the time, and in it these old architects lived and died. They lie there before the door of the old church; it is to be hoped that their slumber is deep, and that the scoffing laughter of modern times will not wake them. More especially would it be sad for those who lie outside of one of those old cathedrals that are yet unfinished, if they suddenly waked in the night and perceived their unfinished work in the fitful moonlight, and if they suddenly realised that the day for its completion was passed, and that their whole life had been useless and in vain.

Such is the utterance of modern times, which has another task, another faith.

I, once, in Cologne heard a little child ask its mother why the unfinished cathedrals were not completed. It was a beautiful child; I kissed its bright eyes, and as its mother could not give him a satisfactory answer, I told him that it was because, at present, men have other work to do.

Not far from Genoa, on the crest of the Apennines, the sea can be seen, a blue strip between the verdant mountain peaks; and the ships dotted on it here and there seem to glide with full sails over the mountains. When this aspect meets the eye at twilight, as the last sun-rays begin their wonderful play with the first shadows of evening, and all colours and shapes are enveloped in the delicate haze, the traveller yields himself to fairy-like illusions; the carriage descends rapidly; sweet, sleeping pictures of the soul are conjured up, till at last a dream carries him into Genoa.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THIS town is old without antiqueness, narrow without neighbourliness, and ugly beyond all measure.

It is built on a rock at the foot of an amphitheatre of mountains, which closely encircle the beautiful bay. The Genoese have thus received from Nature the best and safest of harbours. There, as I have said, the whole town lies on a single rock; and in order to economise space the houses had to be built very high and the streets very narrow, so that darkness looms in most of these, and through only a few of them can a carriage pass. But these houses suffice the inhabitants, who are mostly merchants, for warehouses, and for sleeping accommodation at night. During the day's traffic they run about the town, or sit before their house-door,

or, rather, inside it, since opposite neighbours can almost touch one another with their knees.

Seen from the sea, and especially at eventide, the city presents a better aspect. It lies on the sea's margin like the bleached skeleton of some thrown-up monster of the deep; black ants, which call themselves Genoese, creep in and about it; blue sea-waves lave it, crooning like the song of an old nurse; and the moon, the pale eye of night, looks down in sadness.

In the garden of the Palazzo Doria the old heroes are represented beneath a stone figure of Neptune in a great fountain-basin. But the statue is shattered and crumbled, the water is dried up, and the sea-gulls roost in the neighbouring cypresses. Like a youth who knows all his comedies by heart, the name of Doria instantly recalled to me Frederick Schiller, the noblest, if not the greatest, of German poets.

Although-for the most part in ruins, the palaces of the nobles, those former mighty rulers of Genoa, are still very fine and resplendent with luxury. They stand chiefly in the two principal streets, named Strada Nuova and Strada Balbi. The Durazzo is the most remarkable. It contains good pictures; among others, Paul Veronese's "Magdalen Washing the Feet of Christ." She is so beautiful, that one fears she may be seduced yet again. I stood a long time before her, but ah! she would not raise her eyes! Christ stands there like a Hamlet of religion: "Go to a nunnery, go!" I found there also a few Dutch works, and some excellent productions of Rubens, saturated with the colossal good humour of that Netherland Titan, the wings of whose spirit were so strong that they bore him up to the sun, in spite of the

hundredweights of Dutch cheese hanging to his legs. I cannot pass the smallest picture of this great artist without paying my tribute of admiration to him; and the more so as it is the fashion at present to treat his lack of ideality with a shrug of the shoulders. The historical school in Munich shows itself particularly strong in this respect. One has only to see with what sublime disregard a long-haired "Cornelianer" passes through a Rubens-room! Perhaps, however, this error of the scholars is explicable, when one considers the great contrast that Peter Cornelius presents to Peter Paul Rubens. A greater contrast cannot be imagined; nevertheless, it sometimes occurs to me that a certain analogy exists between them which I can feel rather than point out. They both, perhaps, are influenced by national peculiarities, which a third compatriot—namely, myself—can detect as readily as the slightest intonation of native accent. These secret affinities are not apparent, however, in the geniality and colour-revels of the Netherlander, which smile at us out of all Rubens' pictures, so much so that it might almost be said that he had painted them with the joyous fumes of Rhine wine to the accompaniment of rollicking festive music.

The pictures of Cornelius seem rather to have been painted on Good Friday, while lugubrious passion-songs of the procession were chanted through the street and resounded in the heart of the painter. In productiveness, in creative strength, in the originality of their genius, they resemble one another.

Both are born artists, and belong to the cycle of great masters who flourished at the time of Raphael; a time which could exercise a direct influence on Rubens,

but is so far removed from our day that we are almost frightened by the apparition of Peter Cornelius. He seems, at times, to come to us like the ghost of one of those great masters of the Raphaelite cycle, who has stepped out of the grave in order to paint another picture—a dead creator, self-exorcised through the might of the indwelling life-element that was buried with him. When we examine his pictures, they look at us with eyes as of the fifteenth century, clad in such ghostly garments as rustle past us at midnight. Their limbs have magic strength; they are drawn with dream-like verity, and are powerfully real. But they lack blood, palpitating life-colour. Yes, Cornelius is a creator; yet, when we examine his creations, they seem to us to possess but little life, as though they had been painted one hour before their death, as though they all bore the sorrowful presage of their end.

In spite of their joyousness, Rubens' figures excite in us a similar feeling. They, too, seem to carry in them the death germ; they appear as if, through their very superabundance of life and their red full-bloodedness, they must succumb from an apoplectic stroke. This, perhaps, is that secret affinity which suggests itself so mysteriously in a comparison between the two masters. The excess of joviality in some of the figures of Rubens, and the profound sadness in some of those by Cornelius, affect us perhaps in a similar way. But whence this sadness in a son of the Netherlands? It is perhaps from the ghastly conviction that he belongs to a bygone age, and that his life is a posthumous mission. For, alas! not only is he the sole great master alive, but perhaps also the last who shall ever paint upon this

earth ; between him and the Carracci extends a lengthy obscurity, and the shadows close in after him. His hand is a luminous, ghostly hand, solitary in the night of art ; and the pictures which it paints bear the undefinable mournfulness of that isolation. I have never been able to look at that painter's hand without a secret shudder, any time that I have seen the man himself, that small angular man with burning eyes. Nevertheless, that hand arouses in me a feeling of pious confidence when I remember that it once lay gently on my small fingers and helped me to outline the contour of a face, when I, a little boy, learnt drawing at the Düsseldorf Academy.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

I CANNOT refrain from mentioning the collection of portraits of beautiful Genoese women which are shown in the Palazzo Durazzo. Nothing in the world can tinge the soul with such sadness as looking at portraits of beautiful women who have been dead a hundred years and more. Melancholy seizes us at the thought that nothing remains of the original of those pictures, of all those beauties who were so amiable, so coquettish, so witty, so roguish, so capricious. Of all these may-day heads with their April humours, of all these young lives in their springtide, nothing remains but these coloured shadows which a painter, dead as long a time as they, has painted on an indifferent piece of canvas, which is fading and falling to pieces with age.

Thus it is with all life; the beautiful and the ugly pass away together and leave no trace behind. Death, the hard task-master, spares the rose as little as the thistle; neither does he forget the solitary little grasses in the remote wilderness; he destroys relentlessly, and without cessation. Everywhere he grinds to dust plants and animals, men and their works; and even those Egyptian pyramids, which seem to defy his rage for destruction, are but trophies of his might, memorials of annihilation, the ancient tombs of kings. But more humiliating than this sense of endless perishing, this brooding gulf of annihilation, is the thought that haunts us, that we none of us die with the conviction of being originals. We are all copies of long vanished men. After us other men will be born, one with us in appearance, thoughts, and feelings, to be likewise mown down by Death—a weary, endless game of repetition, in which the fecund Earth is forced suddenly to produce and reproduce more than Death can possibly destroy. She, in such travail, must needs care more for the conservation of the species than for the originality of the individual.

The eerie fascination of these thoughts threw a spell over me, as I looked at the portraits of these beautiful Genoese in the Durazzo palace. One among the number aroused a gentle tempest in my breast, at the thought of which my eyelids still tremble;—it was the portrait of dead Marie!

The custodian of the gallery believed firmly that the picture represented a Duchess of Genoa, and in an official tone he repeated: "It was painted by Giorgio Barbarelli of Castelfranco de Trevigiano, called Giorgione;

he was the greatest painter of the Venetian school, and was born in the year 1477, and died in 1511."

"Never mind that, sir guide. The picture is well executed, although it has been painted a few centuries in advance; but that is no fault. The drawing is correct, the coloration excellent, the folds of the draperies across the breast are perfect. Pray have the goodness to take the picture down from the wall for a moment. I wish merely to blow the dust off the lips, and to chase away the spider that sits in the corner of the frame. Marie had always a hatred of spiders."

"Your Excellence appears to be a connoisseur."

"I was not aware of it, sir guide. I have the talent of being singularly moved by certain pictures, which bring a little moisture to my eyes. But what do I see! Of whom is that portrait of the man in the black cloak that hangs yonder?"

"It is also by Giorgione, a masterpiece."

"I pray you, sir, take it also from the wall for a moment and hold it here opposite this mirror, in order that I may compare whether or not I resemble the picture."

"Your Excellence is not so pale. The picture is a masterpiece by Giorgione; he was the rival of Titian, was born in the year 1477, and died in 1511."

Dear reader, I prefer Giorgione to Titian, and I am especially indebted to him for having painted Marie for me. You will at once perceive with me that Giorgione certainly painted that picture for me, and not for some old Genoese worthy. And it is a remarkable resemblance even to the silence of death. The expression of pain is of the nature of a dream rather than of an

experienced sorrow, and which is very difficult to paint. The whole portrait seems to have been breathed on the canvas. The man in the black cloak is also well painted; the maliciously sentimental lips are happily rendered, parted as though about to relate a story—the story of the knight who wished to kiss his beloved back to life—and when the torch went out——

THE TOWN OF LUCCA.

CHAPTER I.

ENVIRONING Nature affects man—why should not man also affect Nature which environs him? In Italy Nature is as passionate as the people who live there; with us, in Germany, she is more serious, more deliberate and particular. Had Nature once keen sensibilities like men? The inspiriting power of an Orpheus, men say, could move the trees and stones to answering rhythm. Could a like marvel happen now? Men and Nature have become more phlegmatic, and gape at one another. Never more will the court poet of Prussia move the mountains of Templow to dancing, or the lindens of Berlin with the sound of his lyre.

Nature, also, has her history; and it is quite another natural history than that which is taught in the schools. We ought to install in some of our universities, as extraordinary professors, some of those lizards that have dwelt for thousands of years in the rocky crevasses of the Apennines, and then there would be extraordinary things to listen to. But the pride of certain gentlemen of the faculty would revolt against such an installation. Indeed, there are already some of them who have a

secret jealousy against the poor *savant* Fido, fearing that this dog might end by surpassing them in learned fetching and carrying.

The lizards, with their agile little tails and sharp little eyes, related wonderful things to me once when I clambered among the rocks of the Apennines. In very truth there are more things in heaven and earth undreamt of not only by our philosophers, but also by our more ordinary dunces.

The lizards told me that there is a legend current among the stones, that God will one day become a stone, in order to deliver them from their stoniness. An old lizard, however, was of the opinion that this petrification can only take place after God shall have metamorphosed himself into all kinds of animals and plants, and have redeemed them. Only a few stones hold this belief, and they breathe in moonlight. But these few stones who realise their plight are horribly wretched. The trees are in a more enviable condition, because they can weep. But the animals are the most highly favoured, because they can talk, each after his own fashion, and man best of all. One day, when the whole world shall have been redeemed, all creation shall be able to speak, as in the olden times of which the poets sing.

The lizards are an ironical race, and love to befool the other animals. But to me they were so humble, they sighed so loyally, they related to me the story of Atlantis, which I will shortly write for the edification of the pious ones of the earth. I found myself in perfect harmony with these little beings, these conservers of the secret annals of history. May they not be enchanted families of priests, like those of the old Egyptians who

lived in the labyrinths of their rocky grottoes, similarly spying upon Nature? Their little heads, their bodies, and their tails, shine with designs as mysterious as those on the hieroglyphic-caps and garments of the Egyptian hierophant.

My little friends taught me a language of signs where-with I might be able to speak to Nature even in her dumbest moods. I have often comforted my soul therewith, more especially towards eventide, when the mountains lie shrouded in ghost-like, delicate shadows, when the mountain streams rush and leap, plants give out their perfumes, and restless lightning darts hither and thither.

O Nature, thou silent Virgin! Well do I understand the fleeting expressions that lighten thy beautiful face, and thy fruitless efforts of speech; thou movest me to such pity that I weep. But thou also dost understand me, and thou smilest at me out of thy golden eyes. Beautiful Virgin, I understand thy stars, and thou comprehendest my tears!

CHAPTER II.

“NOTHING in the world goes backwards,” said an old lizard to me. “Everything struggles forward, and in the end a great progress will have taken place in Nature. Stones will have become plants, plants animals, animals men, and men will have become gods.”

“But,” cried I, “what will then become of those excellent folk, the old gods?”

"That will all arrange itself, dear friend," answered the other. "In all probability they will retire, or they will be superannuated in some honourable manner."

Many other secrets I learnt from my hieroglyphic-skinned, natural philosopher; but I gave him my promise not to divulge them. I now know more than did Schelling and Hegel.

"What do you think of those two men?" the old lizard asked me with a honeyed laugh, when I once mentioned their two names to him.

"When one thinks," I answered, "that they are only men and not lizards, their knowledge appears astounding. Fundamentally, they teach one and the same doctrine, the philosophy of Identity, which you know so well; but they differ only in their treatment thereof. When Hegel propounds the principles of his philosophy, it is as though one saw those curious figures, which a clever schoolmaster knows how to form out of a skilful arrangement of ciphers, in such a way that an ordinary observer sees only the outward semblance, only the little house, a ship, or soldiers, formed by these numbers; whereas a thoughtful scholar can perceive therein the solution of some arithmetical proposition. Schelling's method, however, resembles those pictures of Indian animals, in which divers kinds of creatures, serpents, birds, elephants, and such-like living items are gathered together with fantastic interlacings. This method is much pleasanter, brighter. All therein lives, pulsates more warmly; whereas Hegel's abstract figures stare at us so deadly cold and grey."

"Good, good," answered the old lizard. "I see

already what you think ; but tell me, have these philosophers many hearers ? ”

I then described to him how, in the learned caravan-serai at Berlin, the camels gather themselves together round the fountain of Hegelian wisdom, kneel before it, let themselves be laden with the precious fluid, and depart to traverse the sand-wastes of Bradenburg. I pictured to him further, how the Neo-Athenians press round the Schelling fountain-head of living-waters, as though it were the best beer, the well-spring of life, the elixir of immortality. A yellow wave of envy passed over the little natural philosopher when he heard that his colleagues enjoyed such adulation, and he asked me angrily, “ Which of the two do you consider the greater ? ”

“ I cannot decide,” I returned in answer, “ any more than I can decide whether Schreckner is greater than Sonntag, and I think——”

“ Think ! ” shouted the lizard in a piercing, haughty tone of infinite contempt, “ think ! and who among you thinks ? My learned sir, for more than three thousand years I have made investigations concerning the mental functions of animals. I have given special attention to men, monkeys, and serpents. I have expended as much study upon these strange creatures as Lyonnet has upon his willow-caterpillars. As the result of all my observations, experiments, and anatomical comparisons, I can assure you that no man thinks. Now and again an idea strikes a man, and he calls these involuntary ideas thoughts, and the stringing together thereof he calls thinking. I give you leave to repeat this in my name. No man thinks, no philosopher thinks ; and

as to his philosophy, it is nought but air and water, like the cloud of the heavens. I have seen many such clouds sail across the sky above me, proud and serene; and the following morning's sun dissolved them into the nothingness out of which they originally came. There is but one genuine philosophy, and it is written in eternal hieroglyphics upon my own tail."

With these words, which were spoken with disdainful emphasis, the old lizard turned his back on me. As he slowly undulated away I saw upon it the wonderful characters which covered the whole tail with brilliantly coloured designs.

CHAPTER III.

THE foregoing conversation took place upon the road between the Baths of Lucca and the town of that name, at a short distance from the great chestnut-tree whose unpruned mighty foliage throws a verdant shade across the brook, and in presence of an old white-bearded goat who wandered by in hermit-like solitude. I was on my way to the town of Lucca, in order to seek out Francesca and Mathilde, whom I, according to previous arrangements, should have joined eight days earlier. But as, at the appointed time, I had wandered out of my way, I set out for the second time upon my journey. I went on foot, by the side of the beautiful mountains and groups of trees, whence golden oranges shone out of the dark green leaves like day-stars, and vine garlands intertwined themselves in luxuriant festoons

for many a mile. The whole country there is like a garden, and is adorned much after the manner of the rural scenes we see upon our stage; even the country people resemble those gaily-clothed figures which delight us on the boards with their singing, laughing, and dancing. Nowhere does the philistine face obtrude itself. And if there be a philistine, at all events he is an Italian orange-philistine and no potato-philistine. The people are as picturesque and as ideal as the country. Each one has an individual expression; his personality asserts itself in the individuality of his postures, the folds of his cloak, and, when needs be, in the handling of his knife. With us, in the country, there are only to be found men with common physiognomies exactly alike in shape; and should twelve of them chance together, and should any one assault them, they call for the police.

I noticed that in the neighbourhood of Lucca, as in the greater part of Tuscany, the women wear large black felt hats with pendent black ostrich feathers; even the women straw-plaiters wear the same heavy head-gear. Most of the men thereabouts wear a light straw hat. A young gallant usually receives such a hat from a girl, who has herself made it for him, and has perchance woven into it many love-thoughts and many sighs. So Francesca sat once among the maidens and flowers of the valley of the Arno and wove a hat for her dear Cecco, kissed every length of straw that she used for it, and trilled her pretty "*Occhii, stelle mortali.*" The curly head that so gaily wore that pretty hat is now tonsured, and the hat itself now hangs, old and worn, in the corner of a dreary abbot's room in Bologna.

I am of those people who always by preference take a shorter cut than the high road directs, and to whom it frequently chances that they lose their way in narrow wood-and-rock paths. That happened here to me; and I certainly required double the time to make my journey to Lucca than any ordinary country roadsman would have needed. A sparrow, of whom I asked the way, only twittered and twittered and could give me no correct advice. I could not win a word from the butterflies and dragon-flies that swayed on the big bell-flowers; for they flitted off before they heard my question, and the flowers shook their soundless bell-heads. Sometimes the wild myrtle waked me with its thin little voice piping from a distance. In haste I climbed to the topmost rocky point and cried, "Ye clouds of the heavens! sails of the air! tell me where the road is that leads to Francesca. Is she in Lucca? Tell me, what does she? Does she dance? Tell me all, and when you have told me everything, tell it to me over again."

As can easily be imagined, a solemn eagle was disturbed from his solitary dreams by my call, and looked at me with disdainful displeasure. But I forgave him readily; for he had never seen Francesca. Therefore could he remain proud and imperturbable on his steadfast rock, contemplate the heavens with a free soul, or stare at me with impertinent quietude. An eagle of this species has an intolerably proud look, and examines one as if he would say, "Pray, what kind of a bird may you be? Are you not aware that I am a king, as much so now as in those heroic days when I carried Jupiter's lightnings, and adorned Napoleon's standard? Are you, perchance, a learned parrot who knows the old

songs by heart, and pedantically re-sings them? Or a forlorn turtle-dove, who feels deeply and coos plaintively? Or an almanack nightingale? Or a degenerate gander, whose forefathers saved the Capitol? Or, perhaps, the servile domestic cock, around whose neck my miniature, the emblem of courageous flight, has been hung out of irony, and of which he boasts as lustily as though he were himself an eagle?" You see, dear reader, what good reasons I had to feel insulted when an eagle thought such things of me. I flatter myself that the look I threw back to him was even prouder than his; and if he made inquiries of the first good laurel-tree, he now knows who I am.

I lost myself in among the mountains as twilight was descending. The sweet woodland song gradually ceased, and the trees rustled more solemnly. A sublime stillness, deep restfulness passed, like a breath of God, through the illumined silence. Here and there a beautiful dark eye peeped at me from the ground and vanished in the same moment. Tender whispers dallied round my head, and unseen kisses softly brushed my cheeks. The evening glow spread like a purple mantle over the hills, whose tops were touched to gold with the last rays of the sun, till it seemed as though they were kings with golden crowns on their heads. I stood there like the Emperor of the World in the midst of these crowned vassals who silently did me homage.

CHAPTER IV.

I DO not know if the monk whom I met near Lucca is a pious man. But I know that his poor naked body is covered with a coarse habit year out and year in ; his bloodless feet are barely protected from thorns and stones by his torn sandals, when he climbs up the jagged rocks, to carry comfort to the sick in the mountain hamlets, or to teach the children how to pray. And he is contented if a piece of bread be given to him to put into his sack, or a little straw to sleep on.

"I will not write against the man," I said to myself. "When, home again in Germany, I sit snugly in my arm-chair beside the crackling oven, with a cup of comfortable tea beside me, I may write against the Catholic clergy ; against the *man* I will not write."

In order to write against the Catholic clergy, a careful study must be first made of their faces. The original face is alone to be seen in Italy. The German priests and monks are only bad imitations, frequently only parodies of the Italian. A comparison of them would have similar results, as when Roman or Florentine religious pictures are compared with those grotesque grass-hopperish figures, who owe their mournful existence to the burgher pencil of some municipal painter of Nuremberg, or else to the sweet simplicity of a sentimental disciple of the long-haired Christian, neo-German school.

The priests in Italy have long ago come to terms with public opinion ; the people there are long since

accustomed to distinguish between sacerdotal dignity and personal unworthiness, to honour the one even when the other is deserving of contempt.

It is this contrast between ideal duty imposed by the claims of the ecclesiastical condition, and the unconquerable demands of the sensual nature—that ancient, eternal conflict between spirit and matter—which makes the Italian priest the stock character in the humorous satires, songs, and novels of the people. Such a result is apparent to us wherever the priesthood exists under similar conditions; for example, in India. In these comedies of that country of immemorial piety, as we have noticed in the *Sakontala*, and find confirmed in the recently translated *Vasatasena*, a Brahmin is also represented as the comic character—a *gracioso* priest, as one might say—without detracting in the least from the respect due to his priestly function or to his privileged saintliness. In the same way, an Italian attends mass or confesses with no lessened devoutness because, only the day before, he found the priest drunk in the mud. In Germany it is quite otherwise. There the Catholic priest wishes not only to represent his dignity by his office, but his office by his person, and so he probably at first takes his vocation very seriously. Then in course of time, when he finds his vows of chastity and humility in conflict with the old Adam in him, he is careful not publicly to violate his vows—especially as he is afraid he may give a handle to our friend, Krug of Leipzig. Therefore he tries to preserve at least the appearance of saintly conduct. Hence the semblance of holiness, the hypocrisy, and the cant of the German priests. With the Italian the mask is much

more transparent, and to it also belongs a certain ironical well-being and a comfortable worldly digestion.

But to what end are these general reflections? They can be of but slight value to you, dear reader, if you desire to write against the Catholic priesthood. For this purpose one must see with one's own eyes the faces which belong to it. Indeed, it is not sufficient only to see them once in His Majesty's Opera House at Berlin. The last German manager certainly did his best faithfully to represent, with the utmost verisimilitude, the coronal procession in *The Maid of Orleans*, so as to place before the eyes of his compatriots an idea of such a procession, with its priests of every colour. But the most realistic costume cannot replace the original figures. Even if an extra 100,000 thalers be frittered away in golden bishop-mitres, lace-trimmed surplices, embroidered vestments, and such-like array, nevertheless the Protestant, critical nose which projects from below these mitres, the thin rationalistic legs which peep out from beneath the white lace of the choir surplices, the enlightened paunches under these too roomy vestments, all this would but remind us that these are no Catholic priests who tread the boards, but merely Berlinese laity.

I have often asked myself whether the General Manager would not have succeeded better, and have presented before us a much truer picture of such a procession, if, instead of giving the rôles of Catholic priests to these ordinary townsfolk, he had allowed them to be filled by those Protestant ecclesiastics who, from their theological chair, their church gazette, and their pulpit, preach the purest orthodoxy against reason,

worldly pleasures, Gensemus,¹ and the devil. In that case one would see faces whose clerical type would create this illusion in a more striking manner. The remark has often been repeated that priests all over the world—Rabbis, Muftis, Dominicans, Consistorial-councillors, Popes, Bonzes, in short, the whole of God's diplomatic corps—bear a certain facial family likeness to one another, as is always to be seen among any people who pursue the same calling. Tailors throughout the whole world are recognisable by the attenuity of their members; butchers and soldiers everywhere evince the same ferocious appearance; Jews have their own peculiar, honourable expression, not because they are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but because they are merchants, and a Christian Frankfort merchant is as like a Jewish Frankfort merchant as one rotten egg resembles another. The spiritual merchants, such as gain their livelihood by religious affairs, end by also having a certain physiognomic resemblance. Of course, certain *nuances* are caused by the different ways and means with which their business is conducted. The Catholic priest conducts it more after the manner of a clerk in a large commercial house.

The Church is the Great House, at whose head is the Pope; it gives him specified instructions, and therewith a specified salary. He works quietly, as one not working on his own account, but who has many colleagues, and who, in the great movement of affairs, may easily remain unnoticed. Only, he has the credit of the House deeply at heart, and still more deeply its

¹ A Göttingen professor, whose philosophical criticisms on the Bible were received with disapprobation by the orthodox church.

preservation, since he would lose his livelihood in the case of a possible bankruptcy. The Protestant pastor, on the contrary, is everywhere his own patron, and carries on a religious business on his own account; not on a whole-sale scale, like his Catholic trade comrade, but in retail. As he has to superintend everything himself, he cannot afford to take things quietly; he must proclaim his articles of faith to the people, and must depreciate the articles of his competitors. And like a small tradesman, he stands, in his little retail shop, full of professional jealousy against all large houses, and especially against the Great House in Rome, which pays thousands of book-keepers and packers, and which has its counting-houses in all parts of the world. Undeniably the various results of all this are plainly discernible in the physiognomies. But they, however, are not visible from the stalls, and the principal traits of family resemblance between Protestant and Catholic priests remain unaltered. Therefore, if the General Manager will liberally pay these gentlemen, they will play their parts to perfection. Their walk will further contribute to the illusion, in spite of the fact that a fine and practised eye will be able to perceive that there exists a subtle shade of difference between their walk and that of Catholic priests.

55C A Catholic priest wanders along as if heaven belonged to him; a Protestant pastor, on the contrary, goes about as if he had been packed out of heaven.

CHAPTER V.

IT was night ere I reached Lucca. How differently it impressed me last week, when I wandered in the daytime through the re-echoing, deserted streets, and felt as though I had been transported into one of those bewitched towns of which my nurse had so often told me tales. The whole town lay quiet as the grave, bleached and deathly in aspect. The sunshine played on the roofs like spangles of tinsel on the head of a corpse. Here and there, out of the windows of some of the old decayed houses, sprays of ivy hung like dried green tears, and over all were the signs of dissolution. The hopeless stagnation of death had everywhere left its blighting trail. The town seemed but the ghost of a town, a stone spectre in the bright daylight. For long I vainly sought to find a trace of living beings. I remember only one sleeping beggar, who lay with outstretched hand in front of an old palace. I remember also seeing up at the window of a dark, little, tumbling-down house, a monk with a fat, red neck protruding a long way from out of his brown cowl, and near to him appeared a nude full-breasted woman; and I saw a youth with the black clothes of an Abbate entering the half-opened door below, carrying a huge bulging-shaped flask of wine in both hands. At the same moment I heard a distant shrill, ironical, little church-bell; and certain stories of Boccaccio flitted through my memory. These sounds could not completely scare away the eerie feeling of horror which shuddered through my soul. It

enthralled me the more powerfully, inasmuch as the sun lit up the haunted house with warm, bright rays ; and I realised that ghosts are still more gruesome when they throw off the black mantle of night, and allow themselves to be seen in bright daylight.

When I returned to Lucca eight days later, I was amazed at the altered appearance of the town ! “What is this ?” I cried, as my eyes were dazzled with lights, and I saw crowds of people streaming through the streets. “Are all these people nocturnal spectres who have risen from the grave to imitate the maddest mummeries of life ?” The high, sombre houses are ornamented with lamps ; bright-coloured tapestries hang from the windows, and almost wholly cover the decayed, grey walls. Over these hangings lean sweet girl faces, so fresh, so blooming, that I perceive it is life herself who is holding her marriage-feast with death, who has invited youth and beauty to the festival. Yes, it was indeed a living Death-Feast—I do not know by what name it is designated in the calendar. In any case it was the anniversary of some patient martyr, for later I saw, borne along to the strains of wedding music, a sacred human skull and a few extra bones, ornamented with flowers and precious stones. The procession was a fine one. Foremost went the Capuchins, who are distinguished from their brethren by their long beards, and represent the Sappers of the Army of the Faithful. Then came the beardless Capuchins, among whom were many noble, manly faces, and even an occasional beautiful, youthful face, which the third tonsure in no wise impaired, because the head seemed thereby to be encircled by a flowing crown

of hair, and rose gracefully on its white neck out of the brown cowl. Thereafter followed cowls of other colours, black, white, yellow, and variegated; also turned-up three-cornered hats; in short, all the cloister costumes with which we have long been acquainted through the zeal of our theatrical manager. After the monks' orders came the priests, with white surplices over black breeches, and coloured hats. Behind them came the high ecclesiastics wrapped in bright-coloured silk vestments, with a kind of high cap on their heads, of a fashion that probably originated in Egypt, and similar to what one sees in the *Magic Flute*, in the works of Denon, and in those of the Egyptologist Benzoni. They were old worn faces; they had the look of some sort of old Guards. Finally there came the staff-bearer, then a canopy, and under it an old man with a still higher cap, and with still richer coverings, and a train which was carried by two old men dressed alike, who acted in the capacity of pages.

The foremost monks went with arms crossed, in solemn silence; but they of the high caps sang a lugubrious song, so nasal, so drawled, so monotonous, I am persuaded that if the majority of the great mass of the people, and if the State religion were Jewish, then the above-mentioned singing would be nicknamed "Mauscheln."¹ By good luck only the half of it was audible, mainly because the procession was followed by several companies of soldiers with sounding drums and fifes, while an escort of grenadiers in double file accompanied the marching priests on either side. There were almost more soldiers than monks; but nowadays many bayonets are required for the support of religion, and whenever the benediction is

¹ A German slang term for vulgar Jewish intonation.

given, cannons must thunder in the distance with a significant sound.

When I see such a procession, in which priests walk along, dejected and pitiable looking, under a proud military escort, I am always smitten with compassion; it is as though I saw our Saviour himself, surrounded with lance-bearers, surrendering himself to justice. The stars at Lucca had evidently the same thoughts as myself, for when sighingly I turned my gaze up to them, they looked back sympathetically to me with their pious, clear, bright eyes. But their lights were not needed; thousands and thousands of lamps, and torches, and girlish faces sparkled at all the windows, and at the corner of every street resinous flambeaux were planted; and, moreover, each priest had his own particular candle-bearer at his side. Most of the Capuchins had little boys to carry their tapers, and the young, fresh, joyous faces looked up from time to time with eager curiosity at the grave, old, bearded men. A poor Capuchin cannot pay for a full-grown candle-bearer, and the boy, to whom he teaches the Ave Maria, or of whose aunt he is confessor, undertakes this office in the procession gratis, and performs it with no lack of love. The monks, who followed, had boys not much bigger; a few more distinguished orders employed older youths, and the high-capped priests had veritable bourgeois people as candle-bearers. Then as to the archbishop—for it was indeed he who walked with a fine humility under the canopy, and allowed the train of his robe to be carried by two grey-haired pages—he had on either side of him a footman, clad in blue livery with yellow trimmings, and they each carried wax

candle with the ostentatious ceremony they would have used at Court.

At any rate, the candle-bearing seemed to me an excellent institution, for I could thereby inspect the faces better; and I am now certain that I have seen them, and in the best light. Well, what have I seen? In the first place, that none lacked the clerical cachet; this much conceded, all their faces differed from each other, as much as from any other faces. One was pale, another was red; this one's nose turned proudly up, that one's tended downwards; here I saw a black, brilliant eye, there a lustreless grey one. But in all these faces the traces were visible of the same malady, a horrible, incurable malady, which will very probably be the cause why, when my great-nephew sees this procession a hundred years hence, he will not find one of them remaining. I fear that I, also, am tainted with this malady. And the consequence is that a strange weakness seizes me when I notice a sickly monk's face, and see on it the symptoms of the suffering which he conceals under his coarse cowl—thwarted love, gout, disappointed ambition, spine disease, repentance, hæmorrhoids, the heart-wound dealt to us by ingratitude of friends, by the calumny of enemies, and by our own sins; all these and much more, that can find room as well under a fashionable tail-coat as under a coarse hood. Oh, it is no exaggeration when the poet cries aloud in his pain, "Life is an illness, and the whole world a hospital!"

"And Death is our doctor——" Ah! I will speak no evil of him, and will not disturb the trust of others; for, since he is the sole doctor, they may as well believe that he is also the best, and that the only remedy which he

bestows—the eternal Earth-cure—is also the best. At all events, it can be said in his favour that he is always at hand; and that in spite of his large practice he never allows any one to desire him in vain. Sometimes he even follows his patient in a procession, and carries his taper for him. It was certainly Death himself that I saw by the side of a pale, woe-begone, sorrow-laden priest; for him, in his thin, trembling hands he carried the flickering taper, nodded good-natured encouragement to him with his anxious bald head; and, weak though he was on his own legs, yet from time to time he gave support to the poor priest, who grew paler and more faint at every step. He seemed to whisper courage to him: “Wait but a little hour, and we shall be home again. I will extinguish the taper and lay you upon the bed; the cold, tired limbs shall rest, and you shall sleep so soundly that you will not hear the jangling of Saint Michael’s bells.”

“Against the man I will write nothing,” I thought when I saw this poor pale priest whom Death incarnate lighted to bed.

Alas! of a truth, one should write against no man in this world. Each one is sick enough in this great infirmary. Involuntarily I remembered one of many polemical lectures delivered in the little hospital at Krakow, wherein I chanced to be a casual spectator. It was horrible to hear how the sick inmates mocked each other about their respective diseases; how the shrunken consumptive jeered at the swollen dropsical patient, how one laughed at the polypus of the other, and this one in return mocked at the hare-lip and ophthalmis of his neighbour; till at last those in a

delirium of fever sprang naked out of bed, tore the covers from the other patients and the bandages from the wounded limbs, and nothing was to be seen but ghastly misery and mutilation.

CHAPTER VI.

“Then he poured wine to all the other gods from left to right, ladling the sweet nectar from the bowl, and laughter unquenchable arose amid the blessed gods to see Hephaistos bustling through the palace.

“So they feasted all day till the setting of the sun; nor was their soul aught stinted of the fair banquet, nor of the beauteous lyre that Apollo held, and the Muses singing alternately with sweet voice.”—*Iliad*.

—when suddenly a pale, breathless, blood-stained Jew entered, bearing a crown of thorns on his head, and on his shoulder a great cross of wood. And he threw this cross upon the gods’ great banquet table: the golden goblets were shaken, the gods were stricken dumb, they grew pale and ever paler till at last they faded away in vapour.

Thereupon followed a mournful time, and the world grew grey and sombre. No longer were there any happy gods. Olympus was a hospital where flayed, roasted, and impaled gods wandered mournfully about, binding up their wounds and singing sad litanies. Religion had no longer joys to proffer, but only consolations; it was a bloody, lamentable, delinquents’ religion.

Perhaps it was a necessity for mankind, sick and

down-trodden? Whosoever sees his god suffer, bears his own sorrows more easily. The light-hearted ancient gods, who themselves knew no pain, knew not the needs of a poor, tormented humanity; and, in turn, a poor, tormented humanity in its dire necessity, could not yield to them with their whole heart. In order to be loved completely with the whole heart, one must have suffered. Sympathy is the last consecration of love, may be it is love's own self. Therefore is Christ the most beloved of all the gods who have hitherto been loved, especially of women.

In order to escape from the turmoil of men, I lost myself in a deserted church; and that which you, dear reader, have even now read was not so much my own thoughts, as involuntary words which spoke loudly within me, while, stretched on an old prayer-bench, the tones of an organ vibrated through me. There I lay with soul attuned to phantasy, improvising still stranger words to the strange music. From time to time my wandering glances penetrated the dusk of the arches, and sought the dark sound-figures which coincided with those organ melodies.

Whose was the veiled figure that knelt before the picture of the Madonna? The overhanging lamp faintly illumined that sorrowing mother of crucified Love—the *Venus dolorosa*. Nevertheless, now and again, a caressing, mysterious ray seemed to steal down upon the beautiful form of the veiled suppliant. This figure remained almost immovable upon the stone steps of the altar; yet in the vacillating light her shadow moved, ran sometimes towards me, then drew furtively back like a dumb Moor, the anxious love-messenger of a Harem. I understood

him. He announced to me the presence of his lady, the sultana of my heart.

Gradually the darkness deepened in the empty edifice; here and there a vague figure glided between the pillars; now and again faint murmurs came from a side chapel, and the organ groaned with long, long drawn-out tones, like sighs from a giant's heart. . . . It seemed, however, as if those organ tones would never cease, as if those dying tones, that lingering agony, would drag on for ever. I felt an unspeakable anguish, an indescribable anxiety, as if I had been buried alive, or as if I had emerged from the tomb long after my death in order to go with lugubrious companions of the night to the church of spectres, in order there to hear the prayers for the dead, and to confess posthumous sins. Sometimes I seemed, in very deed, to see sitting near me in the ghostly twilight the defunct congregation in Florentine costumes of by-gone days, with long pale faces, and gold-bound books in thin hands, murmuring in low tones to themselves, and nodding melancholy recognition to one another. The whimpering tone of a distant death-bell reminded me of the sick priest I had seen in the procession, and I said to myself, "He is dead at this moment, and comes hither to read the first night mass, and now the sad ghost begins his duty."

Suddenly, however, the graceful figure of the veiled suppliant rose from the altar-steps.

Yes, it was indeed she; her living shadow sufficed to chase away the pale phantoms. I saw her, and her alone; I followed her quickly out of the church, and when on the threshold of the door she threw back her veil, I saw the face of Francesca bathed in tears. She

looked like a pensive white rose, pearled with night dew that glistened in the moon rays.

“Francesca, do you love me?” I asked her many times, but she answered little. I accompanied her to the Hotel Croce di Malta, where she and Mathilde lodged. The streets were now empty, the houses slept with their window-eyes shut, and here and there a little light blinked through their wooden eyelids. Above, in the heavens, the breaking clouds disclosed a broad expanse of bright green, wherein swam the crescent moon, like a silver gondola in an emerald sea. Vainly did I implore Francesca to lift her eyes, if only once more, to our old, beloved confidant. She held her little head drooped, dreamingly. Her walk, formerly so gracefully buoyant, was now composedly precise; her step was sedately Catholic; she moved as if in accord with the rhythmic beat of a solemn organ; her limbs now moved in the service of religion, instead of, as formerly, in the quest after worldly pleasures. On the road she crossed herself before every holy image; she refused my offer of aid. When, however, in the Market Place we passed before the Church of St. Michael, where, out of an obscure niche, loomed the figure of a marble Mother of Sorrow, with a sword in her heart, and on her head a crown of little lamps, Francesca threw her arms around my neck, kissed me, and whispered, “Cecco, Cecco, caro Cecco.”

I accepted these kisses quietly, although I well knew that they were intended for a Bolognese abbé, a servant of the Roman Catholic Church. In my capacity of Protestant, I had no qualms of conscience in appropriating the goods of a Catholic cleric, and on the spot I secularised these pious kisses of Francesca. I am aware

F = E

*

that the priests will be furious thereat; they will certainly exclaim about the robbery of church property, and will wish to visit the French law of sacrilege upon me. Alas that I should have to record it, but these kisses were the only thing that I was able to capture that night. Francesca had determined to employ the night hours in prayer on her knees for the good of her soul. In vain did I offer to share in her devout practices; when she reached her room, she shut the door in my face. In vain did I stand outside a whole hour begging admission, and sighed all possible sighs, feigned pious tears, and swore the most holy oaths, with, as a matter of course, priestly reservations. I felt as if I were graduating for Jesuitry, and I sank so far as to offer to become Catholic for this single night.

"Francesca!" I cried. "Star of my thoughts!—thought of my soul! *Vita della mia vita!* my beautiful, oft-times kissed, slender, Catholic Francesca; for this single night, if thou wilt grant it to me, will I become a Catholic—but for this night only! O the beautiful, blessed Catholic night! I would lie in thine arms as an ardent Catholic in the heaven of thy love; from our lips, in kisses, we should receive our gentle confession that the word becomes flesh, that faith becomes apparent in form and substance! What a religion! Over it your pastor sings the Kyrie Eleison, the bells peal and ring, the organ rolls, the mass of Palestrina resounds. That is the body!—I believe, I am blessed, I fall asleep—but when I wake the following morning I will rub sleep and Catholicism out of my eyes, and once more see clearly into the sun and into the Bible, and be again, as formerly, a rational, temperate Protestant."

The next day he will be Protestant

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN, on the morrow, the sun smiled radiantly from the heavens, it dissipated all the doleful thoughts which the procession of the preceding evening had aroused within me, and which had made me look upon life as a malady, and the world as a hospital.

The town swarmed with gay people, with brightly-dressed men, among whom here and there passed a black priestling. The throng talked, laughed, and joked, so that one could scarcely hear the sounds of a bell, which rang for a high mass in the cathedral. This edifice is a beautiful, simple church, whose many-coloured façade is ornamented with those short superimposed columns which seem to us so mournfully *spirituelles*. Within, the pillars and walls were draped with red stuff, and the sounds of joyous music flowed over the swaying crowd. I conducted Signora Francesca on my arm, and when I presented her with holy water at the entrance, and as the soft touch of her moist fingers electrified my soul, I experienced at the same moment an electrifying knock on the leg, so that I nearly stumbled over the kneeling peasant women, who were clad all in white, with long ear-rings and neck-chains of gold, and who covered the pavement in compact groups. As I looked round I saw yet another kneeling woman, who was fanning herself, and behind the fan I spied the mocking eyes of my lady (La belle Irlandaise). I leant towards her, and she breathed languidly in my ear, "Delightful."

"In God's name," I whispered to her, "be serious, do

not laugh ; otherwise we shall certainly be turned out." But neither prayers nor insistence availed. Happily, no one understood our language ; for, when my lady followed us through the crowd to the high altar, she gave free play to her mad humour, as though we were standing alone on the Apennines. She mocked at everything. Even the poor painted pictures did not escape her arrows.

"See there !" she said, "the lady Eve, born from a rib, how she talks to the serpent. It was a good idea of that painter to give the serpent the face and head of a man ; it would have been still more subtle if he had ornamented the seducer's face with a military moustache. Look there, Doctor, where the angel announces to the highly blessed Virgin her favoured condition, and smiles thereover with so much irony. I know what the ruffian thinks. And this Mary, at whose feet the holy alliance from the Land of the Morning kneels, does she not resemble Catalani?"

Signora Francesca, who from her ignorance of English only understood the word Catalani out of all this chatter, hastened to remark that the lady of whom our friend spoke had now lost the greater part of her renown. But our friend did not allow herself to be interrupted, and commented even upon the pictures of the Passion, including one of the crucifixion, a specially lovely painting, wherein three stupid, inactive personages, among others, were depicted as comfortably placed to watch the martyrdom of a god, and who were, my lady persisted, the deputed commissioners of Austria, Russia, and France. Saint Joseph had most to suffer. She made the maddest remarks upon a "Flight into Egypt," wherein Mary sits upon an ass with the child on her knees, while Saint

Joseph, as leader, trots behind. My lady held that the painter had wished to establish a certain resemblance between the driver and the quadruped. Both undeniably drooped their long ears in hanging their melancholy heads. "Oh, in what an unheard-of embarrassment that poor man is placed!" Mathilde cried aloud. "If he believes that the good God has deigned to make him His collaborator, he has good cause to give himself to the devil; if he does not believe it, he is a heretic, and goes to the devil all the same. What a frightful dilemma! That is why he bows his head so mournfully. How the fate of that poor donkey-driver touches me! Never, till the present day, have I been so deeply moved in a church!"

Nevertheless, the inherent seriousness of the ancient frescoes, which appeared on the walls between the draperies of red stuff, had the effect of checking this British mockery to a certain degree. Figures were represented there of the heroic days of Lucca, concerning which so much is written in the works of Macchiavelli, the romantic Sallust, and whose spirit emanates so forcibly from the song of Dante, the Catholic Homer.

The rigid feelings and barbarous thoughts of the Middle Ages speak to us out of these physiognomies; over the dumb lips of many a youth hovers the smiling avowal that the roses were then not all made of stone, nor veiled in crape; that through the piously drooped eyelids of many a Madonna of those days there shot gleams of love-light, as seductive as any that are seen in the eyes of our saints of to-day. It is, in any case, a fine spirit which speaks to us out of

the old Florentine paintings. It is the true, heroic character which we recognise also in the marble statues of the gods of the ancients ; and which does not consist, as our æsthetes pretend, in an eternal emotion without unrest. This old Florentine spirit reveals itself again, maybe but as a traditional echo, in some old oil paintings of later date which hang in the cathedral of Lucca. I was specially attracted by a "Marriage in Cana," by a pupil of Andrea del Sarto, somewhat hardly painted and stiffly modelled. The Saviour sits between the gentle, beautiful bride and a Pharisee with a face, stony as the tables of the law, full of wonder at the genial Prophet who serenely mixes with the happy guests, and regales them with a miracle still greater than the miracles of Moses. For this one, when he struck the rock with hard blows, could only cause water to flow forth, whereas that other had but to speak the word and the jars filled themselves with the best of wines.

Much softer, of almost Venetian colouring, is the picture by an unknown artist that hangs near, wherein the harmonious colouring is overshadowed by the pervading painful sentiment. It represents Mary taking a box of precious ointment, and anointing the feet of Jesus therewith and wiping them with her hair. Christ sits in the midst of his disciples, a beautiful spiritual God, humanly sorrowful with a man's sorrow. He feels a shiver of pity for his own body, destined to so much suffering, and over which is now poured the appropriate honouring unguent reserved for the dead. He smiles sadly down upon the kneeling woman who, prompted by forebodings born from love's anxiety, accomplishes that

deed of compassion; a deed which will never be forgotten as long as there are suffering men, and whose perfume will refresh mankind from generation to generation. With the exception of the disciple who lay on Christ's breast, who has also recorded the act, none of the apostles seem to have grasped its significance: he of the red beard seems even, as is described in the Scriptures, to make the fretful remark: "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred talents and given to the poor?" This economical apostle is the same who carried the purse. Familiarity with money matters had blunted him to all that is the essence of disinterested love, so that he would rather have bartered it for talents for the furtherance of some good end. Moreover, this money-changer is he who betrayed the Saviour for thirty pieces of silver. Thus the Gospel has symbolised, in the history of this banker of the apostles, the mysterious seductive power that lurks in all public bags of gold, and offers a warning against the faithlessness of mere men of business: every rich man is a Judas Iscariot.

"You make the morose face of a believer, dear doctor," whispered my lady; "I have been watching you, and forgive me if I offend you, but you look like a good Christian."

"Between ourselves, I am; yes, Christ——"

"Perhaps you also believe that he is a God?"

"Naturally, my good Mathilde. He is the God whom I love the best; not because he is a legitimate God, whose Father has been God and has governed the world since time immemorial, but because he, born dauphin of Heaven, has nevertheless democratic sentiments, does not love courtly ceremonials; because he is no God of an

aristocracy of Pharisees, and of gold-laced lansquenets, but because he is a modest God of the people, a burgher-God, *un bon dieu citoyen*. Of a truth, if Christ were not a God, I would give my vote that he should be, and much more willingly than an intrusive absolute God would I obey Him, the elected God, the God of my choice."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE archbishop, a grave old man, celebrated the mass in person; and to be honest, not only I, but to a certain extent my lady also, was secretly touched by the spirit which dominates this religious act, and by the dignity of this old man who performed it. Yes, every old man is in himself a priest, and the ceremonies of the Catholic mass are so ancient that they are perhaps the only things come down to us from the infancy of the world, and lay claim to our piety as memorials of our first ancestors.

"See, my lady," I said, "every movement which you see here, the manner of placing the hands together, of extending the arms, these genuflections, these hand-washings, the giving and receiving of incense, this chalice—in fact, the whole vestments of these men, from the mitre to the fringe of the stole, are old Egyptian, the legacy of a priesthood of whose wonderful existence the most ancient documents disclose but little, the earliest priesthood which discovered wisdom, who devised the

primal gods, determined the first symbols, and by whom young humanity——”

“Was deceived for the first time,” added my lady in bitter tones ; “and I believe, doctor, that of this early age of the world nothing has come down to us save a few sad formulas of the deception. And they are still efficacious to-day. For look over there at the sullen, dark faces, and at that fellow remaining there so stupidly on his knees, and whose large open mouth gives him an added air of imbecility!”

“In Heaven’s name,” I answered softly, “what does it matter that this head should be so little enlightened by reason? How does that concern us? What irritates you therein? Daily you see oxen, cows, dogs, donkeys, that are as stupid, without the sight disturbing your equanimity in the least, or exciting you to scornful expression!”

“Ah, that is quite another matter,” cried my lady ; “these animals carry tails behind them, and it angers me that this fellow, with the stupidity of a beast, has, nevertheless, no tail.”

“Yes, that is quite another matter, my lady.”

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER the conclusion of the mass there were many things to look at and to hear ; in particular the preaching of a great square monk, whose daring, ancient-Roman face contrasted wonderfully with his coarse mendicant’s

frock, so that the man looked like an emperor of poverty. He preached concerning heaven and hell, and rose at times to the most furious enthusiasm. He described a heaven of somewhat barbaric splendour; of much gold and silver, precious stones, costly meats, and wines from the best year's vintage; whereupon he made inhaling, rapturous grimaces, and, for sheer delight, moved about from side to side in his cowl. When speaking of the little angels with white wings, he evidently imagined himself to be an angel with white wings. His picture of hell was a little less diverting, and certainly it was of a more practical seriousness. Here the man was much more in his element. He waxed eloquent, especially over the sinners who no longer, in a true Christian manner, believe in the flames of hell, and even in these latter days imagine that they have cooled a little, and will in course of time be extinguished. "And if, indeed," he cried, "hell were on the point of being extinguished, then would I, with my own breath, fan ablaze the last glimmering embers, so that they should flare out again with their ancient ardour." Hearing this voice, which hurled the words out like a north wind, seeing the burning face, the red, bull-like neck, and the powerful fist of the man, one felt this infernal threat to be no hyperbole.

"I like this man," said my lady.

"And with good reason," I answered; "he pleases me, also, better than many of our soft homœopathic soul-doctors, who dilute one-ten-thousandth part of reason in a pail of moral water, and put us to rest therewith every Sunday morning."

"Yes, doctor, I respect his hell, but I have no great

confidence in his heaven, more especially as at an early age I had my own doubts as to the aspect of that place. When I was still young, in Dublin, I used often to lie on my back on the grass and look into the sky, and muse whether the heaven really could contain all the magnificence that was told of it. I wondered how is it that nothing of all this magnificence ever falls earthwards, such as a diamond ear-ring or a string of pearls, or at least a bit of pine-apple cake; that nothing reaches us but hail, or snow, or ordinary rain? This is not quite right, I thought."

"Why do you say that, my lady? Why not rather silence these doubts? Unbelievers who have no faith in a heaven should not make proselytes. Less blamable, and indeed very praiseworthy, is the proselytism of those persons who have a superb heaven, and are unselfish enough to wish not to keep all that splendour to themselves, and who therefore invite their neighbours to take their share, and cannot rest contented till their godly invitation is accepted."

"I am always surprised, doctor, that many of the rich people of this kind, whom we see jealously bestirring themselves as president, vice-president, or secretary of a Conversion Society, to render some old shabby Jew worthy of heaven, never appear to think of allowing him, for their delectation, to share with them here on earth. For example, why do they never invite him to their country-houses in summer, where there are certainly many savoury morsels which to the poor devil would taste as good as though he feasted on them in heaven itself?"

"That can be explained, my lady. Heavenly enjoyments cost them nothing, and it is a double pleasure to

be able to render happiness to our neighbour at so cheap a rate. But unbelievers, to what enjoyment can they invite any one ? ”

“To none, doctor, unless to a long quiet sleep, which, however, may perchance have been long wished for by some unfortunate, especially if formerly he has been much pestered with pressing invitations to heaven.”

Thus did the beautiful woman speak with biting, bitter accents, and not without seriousness I answered her : “Dear Mathilde, in my actions in this world I do not disturb myself concerning the existence of heaven and hell. I am too great and too proud to allow the coveting after heavenly recompenses or the fear of infernal punishments to influence me. I strive after goodness because it is beautiful and attracts me irresistibly ; and I abhor evil, because it is ugly and repellent. Even as a boy, when I read Plutarch—and I read him still in bed every evening, and have often the impulse to spring out and take the express post to become a great man—I was thrilled by that tale of the woman who paced through the streets of Alexandria carrying a skin of water in one hand and a lighted torch in the other. She cried aloud that she would extinguish hell with the water and set fire to heaven with the torch, so that wickedness should no longer be discontinued for fear of punishment, and that good should no longer be practised from desire of rewards. All our actions should spring from a well of disinterested love, whether or not there be a continuity of life after death.”

“Then you also do not believe in immortality ? ”

“Oh, you are subtle, my lady ! I, doubt it ? I,

whose heart spreads its roots ever deeper and deeper into the remotest centuries of the past and of the future ! I, who am myself one of the most eternal of men, whose every inhalation is an eternal life, every thought an eternal star ! I, not believe in immortality ? ”

“ I think, doctor, that it argues a considerable amount of vanity and presumption in us, after we have already enjoyed so much good and beauty in this life, that we should over and above ask the good God to grant us immortality ! Mankind, the aristocrat among animals, who considers himself superior to all his fellow-creations, would also willingly extort this privilege of eternity from the throne of the king of the world, by courtly praise and the songs of priests, by prayers and genuflections. Oh, I know very well what the movement of your lips signifies, mortal sir ! ”

CHAPTER X.

THE Signora begged us to accompany her to the monastery, wherein is preserved that miraculous cross, the most celebrated in all Tuscany. And it was as well that we should quit the cathedral, for my lady's eccentricities would at last have involved us in some predicament. She overflowed with witty humour, deliciously extravagant sallies, as daring as the capering of a kitten in May sunlight. At the exit of the cathedral she dipped her forefinger three times in the holy water, sprinkled herself three times, and murmured, “ *Dem Zefardeyim Kinnim,* ”

which according to her is the Arab formula wherewith witches turn men into donkeys.

On the Piazza a great number of troops were manœuvring, nearly all in Austrian uniform, and commanded by Germans; at least I heard in German the words, "Present arms!" "Shoulder arms!" "Right about turn!" "Halt!" I believe that the Italians and all other European peoples use German words of command. Should we Germans flatter ourselves on this account? Have we commanded so much in the world, that German has become the language of universal command, or do we allow ourselves to be so much commanded, that servile obedience understands the German language the best?

My lady seemed to be no friend of parades and reviews. She drew us away therefrom with ironical fear.

"I do not like," she said, "the near vicinity of men with swords and guns, especially when they march in line and file in great numbers, as in special manœuvres. If even one among these thousands went suddenly mad, might he not pierce me dead on the spot with the weapon he has in his hand? Or else, if another grew suddenly reasonable, and reflected to himself, 'What have you to risk, to lose, even if they take your life? The other world, which is promised to us after death, cannot be as brilliant as it is described, and it may even be as bad, but at all events you cannot be given less than you get down here, less than six kreuzers a day—Therefore, for a joke, run through that little English woman with the impertinent nose!' Is not my life in the greatest danger? If I were king I should divide my troops into two classes. I would make the one believe

in immortality, in order to have courage in combat and not fear death ; and this one I would exclusively use for war. The other I would reserve for parades and reviews ; and so that it should never come into the men's minds that they risk nothing in killing some one just to pass the time. I would forbid them on pain of death to believe in immortality ; I would even give them a little butter on their commissariat bread, so that they might value their lives. And the first, on the contrary, those immortal heroes, I would make their life very bitter, so that they should learn to despise it thoroughly, and should look upon the cannon's mouth as the entrance to a better world."

"My lady," I answered, "you would be a bad regent. You know little about governing, and about politics you understand nothing at all. If you had read the political annals——"

"Possibly I understand all that better than you, dear doctor. From an early age I sought to instruct myself in these matters. When I was still little, in Dublin——"

"And when I lay on my back on the grass, and reflected—or perhaps did not—how in Ramsgate——"

A look, like a faint reproach for ingratitude, fell from my lady's eyes, but she still smiled and continued.

"When I was still little, in Dublin, and could sit on a corner of the stool on which my mother's feet rested, I had always all manner of things to ask—what the tailor, the shoemaker, the baker, in short, what all the people of the world had to do ? And my mother explained : 'The tailor makes clothes, the shoemaker makes shoes, the baker bakes bread.' And then when I asked : 'What then do kings do ?' Then my mother gave me the answer,

‘They govern.’ ‘Do you know, mother, if I were a king, I should try once to pass a whole day without governing, just in order to see how the world would fare then.’ ‘Dear child,’ returned my mother, ‘many kings also do that, and the result is easily perceived.’”

“Of a truth, my lady, your mother was right. Here, in Italy especially, are there such kings, and it is easily observable in Piedmont and Naples——”

“But, dear doctor, an Italian king is not wholly to blame if he does not govern from time to time, on account of the overpowering heat. It is only to be feared that the Carbonari may take advantage of such days; for in these latter times I have remarked that revolutions always break out on such days, when government is suspended. If once the Carbonari erred, and believed it to be a non-governed day, whereas, contrary to all expectation it was a governed day, they would lose their heads. The Carbonari, therefore, can never be sufficiently cautious, and they must accurately reckon their time. But, on the contrary, it is the highest policy for kings to keep their days of non-governing a profound secret; they should, on such days, sit at least once on the seat of government, and cut a few pens, or seal a few envelopes, or rule white paper, in order to keep up appearances; so that the people outside, who from curiosity look through the windows, may certainly think they govern.”

While such observations flitted through my lady’s fine little mouth, a smile of beatitude dwelt on Francesca’s full rosy lips. She spoke little, but her movements had no longer the air of blissful renunciation of the foregoing evening; she advanced more triumphantly, every step was a trumpet-blast. It was, however, more of a

spiritual than of a temporal conquest of which her movements were the indication; she was almost the picture of a triumphant church, and round her head floated an invisible halo. But her eyes, as though smiling through tears, had regained the expression of a child of the world; and of the brilliant human stream that flowed by us not a single detail of dress escaped her scrutiny.

"*Ecco!*" was then her cry. "What a shawl! the marquis must certainly buy me a similar cashmere to make me a turban to wear when I dance the Roxalane. Ah! and he has also promised me a diamond cross!"

Poor Gampelino! You will easily select the turban, but the cross will cause you many bitter hours! But the Signora will torment you for so long a time and put you on the rack, till at last you will submit to her demands.

CHAPTER XI.

THE church, in which the wonderful cross of Lucca is to be seen, belongs to a convent whose name has escaped my memory at the moment. On our entrance we perceived a dozen monks who knelt before the high altar in silent prayer. From time to time, as in a chorus, they spoke a few broken words, which resounded gruesomely through the solitary aisles. The church was dark, and the little coloured windows shed a dappled light upon the shaven heads and the brown cowls. Flickering copper lamps cast a spare light on the blackened frescoes and

on the altar-piece; carved wooden heads of saints stood here and there out from the walls, glaringly painted, and looking grimly life-like in the doubtful light. My lady abruptly exclaimed and pointed to a grave-stone at our feet, whereon in relief lay the stiff figure of a bishop with mitre and crozier, folded hands, and mutilated nose.

"Ah!" she whispered. "Just now I trod unwarily on his stone face, and I fear he will appear to me in a dream to-night, with his crushed nose!"

The sacristan, a pale young monk, showed us the marvellous cross, and related to us the miracles which it had performed. Capricious as I am, I do not think I looked at it with an unbeliever's face. Every now and then I have attacks of belief, especially when, as in this instance, the place and the hour are favourable. At these times I believe that everything in the world is a miracle, and that the whole history of the world is a legend. Was I infected by Francesca's wondering faith when she kissed the cross with passionate exultation? But I felt myself shocked by the no less wild mockery of the witty Briton. It affected me the more that I did not feel free from it myself, and the tendency seemed to me in no wise praiseworthy. It cannot be denied that mockery, that pleasure in contradiction, has a certain element of wickedness in it; whereas earnestness is more allied to better feelings. Virtue, love of liberty, and love itself, are very earnest. Still, there are hearts wherein jest and earnestness, wickedness and holiness, warmth and cold, are strangely blended, and they are difficult to judge. Such a heart dwelt in Mathilde's breast. Sometimes it was a freezing island of ice, out of whose glittering mirror-surface

bloomed languishing palm-trees; at other times it was an enthusiastic, flaming volcano extinguished suddenly by a ringing laugh like an avalanche of snow. She was not radically wicked, and never sensual in spite of her wantonness; indeed, I believe she saw only the humorous side of sensuality, and thus enjoyed herself as with a foolish comedy of marionettes. It was a humorous envy, an amiable curiosity to see how this or that gay fellow will conduct himself in moments of passion. How very different was Francesca! In her thoughts and feelings was a Catholic unanimity. In the day she was a languishing pale moon, in the night she was a glowing sun. . . . Moon of my days! Sun of my nights! I shall never see thee again!

"You are right," said my lady. "I believe in the miraculous efficacy of a cross. I am convinced if the marquis is not too niggardly over those promised diamonds, he will work a brilliant miracle upon the Signora. She will end by being so dazzled that she will fall in love with his nose. I have also heard of the miraculous virtue of certain 'order' crosses, which can make a rascal of an honest man."

Thus did the pretty woman jest upon everything. She coquetted with the sacristan; she made the drollest excuses to the broken-nosed bishop; she politely absolved him from his problematical return-visit; and when we reached the holy water basin, she wanted definitely to try and change me into a donkey.

Was it simply the mood which the place inspired, or did I wish, as sharply as possible, to put an end to this jesting which genuinely provoked me? Suffice it to say, I threw myself into the requisite pathos and said, "My

lady, I like no women-scoffers of religion. Beautiful women without any religion are like flowers without scent. They are like those cold, empty tulips who, in pots of Chinese porcelain, themselves look so like porcelain; and who, if they could speak, would certainly demonstrate to us how they have developed quite naturally from an onion; how it suffices here below not to have a bad odour, and how reasonable flowers require no scent."

Immediately on hearing the word tulip, my lady evinced the liveliest emotion; and while I spoke, her idiosyncrasy against this flower affected her so strongly that she closed her ears. It was in part comedy, but also in part genuine earnestness, that she threw me a scornful glance, and asked me in a tone of bitter mockery, "And you, dear flower, to which of the existing religions do you belong?"

"I, my lady, I belong to them all; the scent of my soul reaches to the heavens, and causes even the eternal gods to swoon therewith."

CHAPTER XII.

THE Signora, who did not understand our conversation, which for the most part was carried on in English, inferred, Heaven knows how, that we were squabbling over the superiority of our respective country people. She praised the English equally with the German, though in her heart of hearts she considered the first to be fools and the latter to be stupids. She thought badly of the Prussians, whose land, according to her geography, lay far

beyond England and Germany. She thought especially badly of the King of Prussia, the great Frederick, for her enemy, Signora Serafina, had danced the previous year in his benefit ballet. It is indeed strange that this king—namely, Frederick the Great—should still live in the Italian theatres, and in the memory of the Italian people.

“No,” said my lady, without paying attention to the Signora’s sweet chatter, “no, there is no need to change this man into a donkey; certainly not, since now he changes his opinion every ten steps, and continually contradicts himself. He is becoming a proselytiser, and I even think that he is a Jesuit in disguise. I must now, for my own safety, assume a devout face; otherwise he will give me over to his co-hypocrites in Christ, to the holy Dilettante Inquisition, who will burn me in effigy, since the police no longer permit them to throw the actual persons into the fire. Ah! worthy sir! only do not believe that I am as reasonable as I look. I do not wholly lack religion. I am no tulip! For love’s sake, no tulip; for Heaven’s name, no tulip! I would rather believe in everything! I believe already in all the most essential statements of the Bible. I believe that Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and further that Jacob begat Judah, as also that this one knew his daughter-in-law Tamar on the high road. I believe also that Lot and his daughters drank too much. I believe that Potiphar’s wife held the garments of the pious Joseph in her hands. I believe that the two elders who surprised Susannah in her bath were very old men. I believe, moreover, that the patriarch Jacob commenced by deceiving his brother and then his father-in-law, that King David gave Uriah a good post in the front of his

army, that Solomon took to himself a thousand wives and then declared that all is vanity. I believe also in the Ten Commandments, and even observe the most of them; I do not covet my neighbour's oxen, neither his maid, nor his cow, nor his donkey. I do not work on Sunday, the seventh day, on which God rested; indeed, as a precaution, since there is no longer a certainty which this seventh day of rest really was, I often do nothing the whole week. But of the commandments of Christ I also practise the most important, namely, that we must love our enemies—for ah! those men which I have most loved were always, without my knowing it, my worst enemies!”

“In God's name, Mathilde, do not weep!” I cried, when I detected a tone of the acutest bitterness in this flow of mockery, like a serpent darting from a bed of flowers. I knew this tone of old, which always caused the spiritual crystal heart of this wonderful creature to vibrate powerfully, even if not for long; and I knew that, easily touched, it was as easily pacified by the first good piece of absurdity that was said to her, or which flowed through her own mind. While leaning against the doorway of the monastery she pressed her burning cheeks against the cold stone, and with her long hair wiped away the trace of a tear. I sought to re-arouse her good spirits, and endeavoured in her own ironical manner to mystify poor Francesca by imparting to her the most important news concerning the Seven Years' War, which seemed to interest her immensely, and which she believed had not yet ended. I related many interesting anecdotes about the Great Frederigo, the spiritual, gaitered-god of Sans Souci, who founded the Prussian

Monarchy, and who, in his youth, played very prettily on the flute, and also wrote verses in French. Francesca asked me whether it was the Prussians or the Germans who were the conquerors? For, as I have already remarked, she considered the first to be quite a distinct people, and in Italy the name of German was then used to designate the Austrians only. The Signora wondered not a little that I had myself lived a long time in the *Capitale delle Prussia*, namely, in *Berlino*, a town that is situated right at the top in geography, not far from the Ice Pole. She shuddered when I described to her the dangers to which one is sometimes exposed when a Polar bear meets one in a street. "For, dear Francesca," I explained to her, "there are far too many bears in garrison at Spitzbergen, and these, from patriotic motives, come from time to time to spend a day in Berlin in order to see 'the Bear and the Pasha' played. Or else they go to Beyermann, in the Café Royale, to eat good cheer and drink champagne, which often costs them more gold than they have brought with them; in which case one of the bears remains chained there till his comrades return and pay; whence comes the expression 'to chain a bear.' Many bears live in the town itself: indeed, it is said that Berlin owes its origin to bears, hence the name Berlin. The State bears are, however, very tame, and so well educated that they write the finest tragedies and compose the most exquisite music. Wolves are also common, and they wear, on account of the cold, sheepskins from Warsaw, so that they are not so easily recognised. Wild geese flutter about here and there and sing bravuras, and reindeers run round about as art connoisseurs.

"The Berlineses live very moderately and are diligent,

and the greater number sit up to the middle in snow, and write dogmatic, edifying books, religious tales for young ladies, catechisms, sermons for every day in the year, Eloha-poems: and withal they are very moral, for they sit in the snow up to their navel."

"Are the Berlineze then Christians?" asked Francesca in great astonishment.

"Their Christianity has certain peculiarities. Fundamentally they lack it altogether, and they are much too rational to practise it seriously. But as they know that Christianity is useful in a State, inasmuch as under its influence subjects obey with pretty humility, and there is not too much stealing and murdering, they endeavour with great eloquence to convert at all events their neighbours to Christianity. They seek, as it were, substitutes in a religion which they wish to maintain, of which the rigorous exercises are too wearisome for themselves to fulfil. In this dilemma they make use of the zeal of the poor Jews. These become Christians in their place; and since, for money and good works, these poor Jews allow themselves to be passive instruments, they are already so well versed in Christian exercises that they regularly make an outcry against unbelief, fight to the death for the Trinity, and believe therein even in the dog-days, enrage themselves against the Rationalists, overrun the country as missionaries and faith-spies, spread abroad edifying little tracts, roll the whites of their eyes better than others in church, make hypocritical faces, and are such adepts at canting, that here and there they have already aroused the jealousy of the profession, and the ancient masters of the guild begin secretly to complain that Christianity is now wholly in the hands of the Jews."

CHAPTER XIII.

IF the Signora did not follow me, you, dear reader, will certainly understand me better. My lady also understood me, and this fact restored her to good humour. Yet when I—I no longer know if with serious mien—wished to pay tribute to the opinion that the people have need of a definite religion, she could not refrain from contradicting me in her usual manner.

“The people must have a religion!” she cried. “I hear that sentence zealously preached by thousands of stupid, deceived, hypocritical lips. . . .”

“Nevertheless it is true, my lady. Just as a mother cannot truthfully answer her child’s every question, because its powers of understanding do not yet permit of it, so also must there be a positive Religion, an existing Church that can give definite, sensible answers to the metaphysical questions of a people, according to the measure of its power of comprehension.”

“O fie, doctor; your comparison reminds me of a story whose ending will not coincide with your opinion. When I was still small, in Dublin——”

“And lay on my back——”

“But, doctor, it is impossible to speak a reasonable word with you. Do not smile so impudently, but listen to me! When I was still small, in Dublin, and sat at my mother’s feet, I asked her once what was done with the old full moons. ‘Dear child,’ she answered, ‘the good God breaks the old full moon in pieces, and out of these he makes little stars.’ My mother cannot be

reproached for making this false explanation, for with even the most thorough astronomical knowledge she could not have made me understand the whole system of the sun, moon, and stars. She gave me a definite, sensible answer to my metaphysical question. It would perhaps have been better if she had postponed the explication till I had reached a riper age, or at least if she had not imagined a falsehood. For, when the little Lucy and I were together, during a full moon, and I explained how little stars would soon be made of it, she laughed at me and said that her grandmother, the old O'Meara, had narrated to her how the full moons are eaten in hell as fire-melons, and how, as there is no sugar there, pepper and salt have to be sprinkled on them. If Lucy had begun by laughing over my theory, which was somewhat Evangelical, I ended by laughing still more over her gloomy Catholic idea. From laughter we came to strife, we hit, scratched, and spat at each other in the most polemical manner, until the little O'Donnell, returning from school, tore us asunder. This boy had enjoyed better instruction in heavenly lore; he knew a little mathematics, and he quietly demonstrated to us our double errors and the foolishness of our fight. And what happened? We two girls temporarily suspended our war of opinion, and united our forces to belabour the quiet little mathematician."

"My lady, it grieves me, but you are right. It cannot be altered. Men will always fight for the excellence of their religious beliefs that were instilled into them in their infancy, and the reasoners will always have to suffer for both sides. Certainly it once was otherwise. In olden days it occurred to no one specially to laud the

doctrines and cults of their religion, or to abuse that of others. Religion was a beloved tradition, sacred history, memorial ceremonies, and a mystery transmitted from the forefathers. It was a kind of family Sacra of the People ; it would have been considered as an outrage if a stranger, and one not of his own race, had proposed a community of religion to a Greek ; indeed, he would further have considered it an inhuman deed to cause any one by force or ruse to abjure his own religion, and adopt that of another."

But at length out of Egypt, the fatherland of crocodiles and of everything sacerdotal, there came a people who brought with it leprosy and stolen implements of gold and silver. It brought a so-called positive religion, a so-called Church, a scaffolding of dogma to which men clung ; also holy ceremonies, which men observed perforce—the forerunner of our modern State-religions. And thereafter sprang up fanaticism, proselytism, intolerance, and all those holy horrors which have cost the race of man so much blood and so many tears.

"*Godam !* what a desperately wicked people !"

"O Mathilde ! it has long ago been damned, and has dragged its tortures through the centuries. O those Egyptians ! their handiworks defy time, their pyramids stand for ever unmoved, their mummies are as indestructible as ever. And equally indestructible is that mummification that wanders over the earth, wrapped round in its ancient Letter of the Law ; a piece of World History, a ghost which for its support traffics in usury and in old clothes. Look, my lady, at that old man with the white beard, whose point seems to be turning black again, with the ghost-like eyes."

"Are not those ruins over there ancient Roman tombs?"

"Yes, even there sits the old man; and perhaps, Mathilde, at this moment he is offering up his prayer—a terrible prayer—in which he laments his sufferings, and accuses the people who have long since vanished from the earth, and who now only live in nursery tales. But he, in his pain, scarcely notices that he sits on the tombs of those very enemies, for whose destruction he implores Heaven."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN the foregoing chapter I spoke of positive religions only in so far as they, as formal Churches, are privileged by the State under the name of State-religion. But there is, however, a pious dialectic, dear reader, which will demonstrate to you in the tersest manner that an adversary of churchdom, of one such State-religion is also an enemy of Religion and of the State, an enemy of God and the King, and, as the usual formula runs, an enemy of the throne and of the altar. But I say to you that it is a lie. I honour the inner holiness of each religion, and submit myself to the exigencies of the State. If I have no special veneration for anthropomorphism, yet I believe in the omnipotence of God. And again, if the king is foolish enough to contend against the spirit of the people, or ignoble enough to weaken their organs by intrigues and persecution; in my profoundest convictions I, nevertheless, remain a partisan of kingship, of

the monarchical principle. I do not hate the throne, but only the *blasé* noble-born vermin who have made their nests in the rents of the old throne, and whose character Montesquieu has so well depicted in the words: "Ambition in league with haughtiness, covetousness striving to enrich itself without work, antipathy to truth, flattery, disloyalty, perfidy, disdain of burgher duties, fear of princely virtues, self-interest in princely vices."

I do not hate the altar, but I hate those serpents which lurk under the ruined stones of old altars; wily serpents, who know how to smile as guilelessly as a flower while they, glittering worms with soft words, secretly instil their poison into life's chalice, and pour their slanders into the ears of the pious—

"Mel in ore, verba lactis.

Fel in corde, frans in factis."

Just because I am a friend of the State and of religion, do I hate that abortion which is called State-religion, that object of derision born from the concubinage of temporal and spiritual power, engendered by the white horse of Antichrist and the she-ass of Christianity. Were there no such State-religions, no privileges pertaining to a dogma and a cult, Germany would be united and strong, her sons would be great and free. But, alas! our fatherland is torn asunder by religious dissensions, the people are divided into inimical religious parties; Protestant subjects quarrel with their Catholic princes, or vice versa. Everywhere there is distrust on account of crypto-catholicism or of crypto-protestantism; everywhere accusations of heresy, the espionage of opinions,

pietism, mysticism, the snivelling of church gazettes, sect hatreds, proselytism; and, while we dispute for heaven, we are losers on this earth. An indifference to religious things would perhaps be the only method of saving us; and an enfeebling of faith would perhaps give Germany a stronger political power. In the interest of religion itself, in its sacred character, it is most pernicious that it should be clothed with privileges, that its servants, in preference to any others, should be paid by the State, and should pledge themselves to uphold the State in order to retain this salary.

In this way one hand washes the other; the spiritual the temporal, and *vice versa*; and the result is a wish-wash which is a folly to God and an abomination to men.

Again, an antagonist to the State is also an enemy to the religion which the State has endowed with privileges, and which is therefore its ally. Even the harmless believer becomes a suspect if he discern a political design in State-religion. The haughtiness of the priests is most repellent when, in return for the service which they believe they render to the State, they dare to reckon on its support; when, in return for the spiritual fetters which they lent it wherewith to bind the people, they can have its bayonettes at their disposal. A religion can sink no lower than when it is raised to the rank of a State-religion; it is as though it had lost its guilelessness and had grown proud before the world, like an acknowledged favourite. Undeniably, more homage and assurances of respect are offered to her. Daily she celebrates fresh victories with glittering processions; and in these triumphs even generals of Bonaparte carry tapers before her; the proudest spirits

swear fealty to her banners; daily, unbelievers are converted and baptised. But all this flowing of water does not make the soup stronger, and the new recruits of the State-religion are like those soldiers which Falstaff levied—they fill the churches. Of sacrifice there is no longer any question. Missionaries go their rounds with tracts and books for conversion like commercial travellers with their samples; there is no danger attached to the business, which is transacted according to mercantile and economical forms.

A religion remains grand and honourable as long as it is in rivalry with other religions, while it is persecuted more than it persecutes. It then has enthusiasm, sacrifices, martyrs, and palm leaves. How beautiful, how holy, how pure and simple was Christianity in the first century, while it yet resembled its divine founder in the heroism of suffering. It was then still the beautiful legend of a homely god who, in the form of a gentle youth, wandered under the palm-trees of Palestine, preached human love, and revealed those doctrines of liberty and equality which were later recognised as true by the greatest thinkers, and which, as a French gospel, has inspired our century.

Compare with that religion of Christ's, the various Christianisms which have been constituted the State-religions in various lands. For example, the Roman and Apostolic Church, or that Catholicism without poetry which we see as the "High Church of England," that lamentable, decaying skeleton of a faith, in which all vitality is quenched! Monopoly is as injurious to religions as it is to industries. Religions retain their power by free competition only, and they will regain their

primitive splendour only when the political equality of cults, or I might say when the industrial liberty of the gods, is established.

All noble-minded men in Europe have long since declared that this is the only means whereby to save religion from absolute ruin. Nevertheless, its servants would prefer to sacrifice even the altar itself than that they should lose the least particle of those things which are offered to the altar; even the nobles would rather abandon the throne and the august person who sits upon it to certain destruction, than from conviction relinquish any one of their privileges which is an injustice. This affected interest for throne and altar is, after all, only a farce played to the people!

Whosoever possesses the secret of the fraternity knows that the clergy has far less respect than the laity for the God whom they know how to knead out of bread and wine to their own profit; and that a commoner has more veneration for the king than have the nobles. And this very royalty; to which they show such honour and for which they demand so much respect from others, they despise and deride in their hearts. Indeed, they resemble those people who, at a fair, exhibit to a gaping public for money a Hercules, a giant, a dwarf, a savage, or a fire-eater, or some such wonderful man, whose strength, size, bravery, and invulnerableness, or, if he be a dwarf, his wisdom, they extol with the greatest vain-glorification. A blare of trumpets is sounded and coloured jackets are worn, beneath which, in their hearts, they laugh the while at the credulity of their wondering dupes. They even mock their best "draws," whose prestige in their eyes has worn off through daily familiarity, and with

whose weaknesses and art of making themselves up they are too well acquainted.

Whether the good God will much longer suffer himself to be represented as a suffering puppet by priests who make money thereby, I do not know. At any rate, I would not be surprised to read in the "*Hamburg Impartial Correspondence*" that the ancient Jehovah had warned every one no longer to give credit in His name to any one, be he who he may, not even to his own son. But I am convinced that we shall see the time when kings will no longer surrender themselves as passive puppets in the hands of their contemptuous nobles; when they will break the bonds of etiquette, escape from their marble booths, and indignantly throw away from them the glittering baubles, which are intended to impress the people—the red mantle which struck terror like that of an executioner, the diamond circlet which was drawn over their ears in order to shut out the voice of the people, the golden staff put into their hands as a symbol of lordship. And the liberated kings will be as free as other men, will have the same sensations as free men, will marry as free men, will confess their opinions as free men—and this will be the Emancipation of Kings.

CHAPTER XV.

WHAT will remain to the aristocracy, however, when they have robbed the crowned heads of their subsistence, when kings are the property of the people, and head an

honourable and trustworthy regiment in accordance with the will of the people, the unique source of all power? What will the priests do, when the kings perceive that a little sprinkling of oil gives to no human head immunity from the power of the guillotine, even as the people daily perceive more and more that of oblations there is no satiety? Indeed, nothing remains to the aristocracy and to the clergy but to bind themselves together, and to cabal and intrigue against the new world order.

Futile efforts! The flaming giantess of Time strides quietly forward, heedless of the yelping of the rabid pastors and petty nobles down below. How they howl each time that they burn their snouts on a foot of that giantess, or when she perchance unwittingly steps on their head so that they spit out hidden poison! Then their rage vents itself the more spitefully against Time's own children, and, powerless against the masses, they endeavour to wreak their vengeance on individuals.

Truly, we must confess, many a poor child of Time feels, nevertheless, the blow which lurking priests and Junkers know how to deal him in the dark; and, ah! even though a glory encircle the wounds of the conquerors, they bleed nevertheless, and they suffer! It is a strange martyrdom that such conquerors endure in our days; it is not prosecuted with the bold outspokenness of earlier days, wherein the martyr found a quick scaffold or a jubilant stake. The method of martyrdom—the sacrificing of everything earthly for a heavenly joke—is always the same; nevertheless, it has lost its minor joy-in-believing; it is now more of a resigned steadfastness, a continuous endurance, a lifelong death. And it even happens that in the grey cold hour the

holiest martyr is assailed with doubts. There is nothing more terrible than those hours wherein Marcus Brutus began to doubt the reality of Virtue, for which he had sacrificed everything. And ah! he was a Roman and lived in the heyday of Stoicism. We are, alas! of weak modern stuff; and, added to that, we see the successful growth of a Philosophy which pronounces all enthusiasm to be of only relative importance, and consequently destroys itself, or at all events neutralises it to a self-conscious Don Quixotism.

Cold and shrewd philosophers! How pityingly they smile at the self-tormentings and the mad illusions of a poor Don Quixote! But for all their scholastic wisdom they do not mark that Quixotism is the most precious thing in life—is very life itself, and those Don Quixotisms are winging the whole world, and all thereon who philosophise, make music, plough, and yawn, to bolder flight. To the great mass of the people, together with the philosophers, it is no other than a colossal Sancho Panza, who, for all his sober dislike to cudgellings, his homely comprehension, follows the crazy knight through all his dangerous adventures. He is allured by the promised rewards, in which he believes because he desires them; and still more impelled by the mystic power which enthusiasm always wields upon the populace, as we can see in all political and religious revolutions, and perhaps also in the smallest daily occurrences. Thus, for example, thou, dear reader, art the Sancho Panza of the mad poet whom thou hast followed through the mazes of this book, doubtless with headshakings, but whom thou hast followed, nevertheless.

CHAPTER XVI.

STRANGE! "The Life and Deeds of the ingenious Knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra," was the first book which I read after I reached the age of intelligent boyhood and was somewhat proficient in the art of spelling. I still remember quite distinctly that short time during which I stole away from the house early in the morning to the Hofgarten, in order there to read *Don Quixote* undisturbed. It was a beautiful May day. The budding spring lay smiling in the still morning light, and allowed herself to be praised by the nightingale—her sweet flatterer—who sang his love-song with such caressing tenderness, such enthusiastic ardour, that the abashed buds burst open, the lush grasses and the moted sunbeams hastily kissed each other, the trees and the flowers shivered with pure delight. I, however, sat down upon an old moss-covered stone-seat in the so-called Walk of Sighs, not far from the waterfalls, and rejoiced my little heart with the great adventures of the dauntless knight. In my childish *naïveté* I took everything in serious earnestness.

No matter how absurdly the poor hero was mishandled by Fate, I still thought "That must be so, all that belongs to the days of heroism, ridicule as well as wounds;" and it grieved me deeply, for I sympathised therewith in my soul. I was a child, and unacquainted with the irony which God has created in the world, which in turn the great poet has imitated in his printed little

world. I could have shed bitterest tears when, in return for all his magnanimity, the noble knight received only ingratitude and blows. And as I, still unskilled in the art of reading, pronounced every word aloud, all the birds and the trees, the stream and the flowers, heard me; and as these guileless natures, like little children, knew nothing of the world-irony, they too construed everything as sober earnest. They wept with me over the sorrows of the poor knight; even a worn-out oak sighed, and the waterfall shook his white beard more vigorously, and seemed to inveigh against the wickedness of the world. We felt that the knight's heroism equally deserved admiration when the lion turned its back on him without desiring to fight, and that his deeds were the more praiseworthy the weaker and more wasted his body became, the rottener the armour which protected him, the more pitiable the nag which carried him. We scorned the vulgar rabble that cudgelled him, and still more the high-born rabble, decked with gaily-coloured silken mantles and distinguished by dukes' titles, who held in scorn a man so greatly their superior in powers of mind and in nobility of heart. Dulcinea's knight rose ever higher in my esteem, and won more of my love the longer I read in that wonderful book—which happened daily, and in the same garden, so that by autumn I had already reached the end of the history. Never shall I forget the day on which I read of the sorrowful duel wherein the knight was so ignominiously worsted!

It was a gloomy day; ugly, misty clouds dragged across the grey heavens, the yellow leaves fell sorrowfully from the trees, heavy drops of tears hung on the last flowers

whose withered, dying heads drooped mournfully; the nightingales had long since vanished, and I was surrounded on every side with the picture of decay. My heart was like to break when I read how the noble knight lay all dusty and bruised on the ground, and, without raising his vizor, spoke to his conqueror in a weak, broken voice as if from the grave, "Dulcinea is the loveliest woman in the world, and I the most luckless knight on earth; but it would not be seemly that my weakness should deny this truth—drive home your lance, knight!"

Alas! this shining knight of the silver moon, who conquered the noblest and most dauntless man on earth, was a masked barber!

CHAPTER XVII.

THAT is now long ago. Many new springs have bloomed since then, but ever they lack its mighty magic, for ah! I no longer believe the sweet lies of the nightingale, spring's flatterer. I know how her witchery decays; and when I look at the youngest rosebud, in my mind I see it bloom to an aching red, faded and blasted by the winds.

But in my breast there still glows that flaming love that soars yearningly over the earth, that roves adventurously athwart the wide, yawning space of the heavens, that is thrust back therefrom by the cold stars. It sinks home again to the little earth, and sighingly realises that in the whole of creation there is nothing more beautiful or better than the heart of man. This love is enthusiasm,

a truly god-like quality, whether its actions be wise or foolish. Therefore, the little boy did not uselessly squander his tears, which he shed over the sorrows of the crazy knight, any more than when as a youth he wept many a night in his study over the death of the holy heroes of Freedom, over King Agis of Sparta, over Caius and Tiberius Gracchus of Rome, over Jesus of Jerusalem, and over Robespierre and Saint Just of Paris.

Now that I have donned the *toga virilis* and am myself a man, tears must have an end; I must act as a man, imitate the great predecessors, and, please God! in the future be wept over by boys and youths. Yes, these are they upon whom we can count in this cold time of ours, for they can be kindled by the glowing aspirations which breathe on them from out the old books, and thus do they understand the flaming heart of the present. Youth is disinterested in thought and feeling, and therefore believes and feels truth to the uttermost, and never wavers wherever a bold acknowledgment of belief and action is concerned. Older people are self-seeking and narrow-minded; they think more of the interest of their capital than of the interests of humanity. They allow their own little barque to sail quietly onward in life's runnel, and take little thought of the seamen battling with the waves on the high seas; or they clamber with pertinacity to the height of mayordom or of the presidentship of their clubs, and shrug their shoulders over the pictures of heroes that the storm has thrown down from the pillars of glory. And thereupon they relate, perchance, how in their youth they themselves had run their heads against the wall; for that wall is the Absolute Law, and for them the one thing existing which,

because it is, is therefore reasonable. Wherefore, whosoever cannot endure this most reasonable, unquestionably existing, thoroughly legislated absolutism, are also unreasonable.

Again, these good-for-nothings, who would philosophise us into a meek slavery, are, nevertheless, more estimable than those reprobates who never explain their maintenance of despotism upon rational grounds, but justify it on historical grounds as a right of usage to which in course of time they have habituated mankind, and which therefore is legitimately and lawfully immovable.

Ah! I will not, like Ham, raise the covering from the shame of the Fatherland; but it is terrible how the art has been understood of making slavery garrulous, and how German philosophers and historians have racked their brains in order to defend that despotism—be it never so foolish and blundering—as reasonable or justifiable. Silence is the slave's honour, says Tacitus; those philosophers and historians assert the contrary, and point as argument to the ribbon of honour in their buttonhole.

Perhaps they are right, and I am only a Don Quixote. Perhaps the reading of all manner of wonderful books has turned my head, even as in the case of the Knight of La Mancha; and Jean Jacques Rousseau was my Amadis of Gaul, Mirabeau my Roldan or Agramanth; and I have studied too much the heroic deeds of the French Paladin and the Round Table of the National Convention. Certainly my madness and the fixed ideas which I created out of these books are of an opposite kind to the madness and fixed ideas of him of La Mancha. He wished to re-establish the waning

knighthood ; I, on the contrary, wish wholly to annihilate whatsoever has survived from that time ; and thus we act from totally different motives. My colleague mistook windmills for giants ; I, on the contrary, see only vociferous windmills in our modern giants. He mistook a leathern wine-skin for a crafty wizard, and I see only a leather wine-skin in our modern wizards. He mistook every beggar's inn for a castle, every donkey-driver for a knight, every stable wench for a court lady ; I, on the contrary, look upon our castles as trumpery inns, our knights as donkey-drivers, our court ladies as stable wenches. Just as he mistook a puppet play for a State action, so do I hold our State action to be a pitiful puppet play. Nevertheless, as bravely as the brave Knight do I strike in amongst the wooden company. Alas ! such deeds of heroism often result as badly with me as with him, and like him I have to endure much for the honour of my lady. Were I to deny her only from paltry fear or from a base desire for gain, I could live comfortably in this existing reasonable world. I would lead a pretty Maritorne to the altar, allow myself to be blessed by a fattened magician, banquet with noble donkey-drivers, and beget innocuous novels and more little slaves.

Instead of that, decorated with the three colours of my lady, I must be always upon the defensive and fight my way through unspeakable oppression ; and I gain no victory that has not cost me some of my heart's blood. Day and night I am in tribulation, for those enemies are so tough that many whom I have struck to death can nevertheless present themselves with an appearance of life, change themselves into all manner of

forms, and molest me day and night. What agonies I have already been forced to endure from these cursed ghosts ! Wherever love blossoms for me there they slink in, these malignant sprites, and nip off the guiltless bud. Everywhere, and where I least anticipate it, I discover their silvery, shiny track on the ground ; and did I not take great care, I might slip disastrously even in the house of my next love. She might laugh and might consider such apprehensions mere imaginings like those of Don Quixote. But an imagined pain nevertheless hurts ; and if a man imagines he has tasted poison he may thus contract consumption—in any case he will grow fat therewith. And that I have become fat is a calumny ; at least I have received no fat sinecure, though I possess the necessary talents therefor. There is moreover no trace upon me of the fat things of relationship. I imagine that every possible thing has been given to me that could keep me lean. When I hungered I was fed with serpents ; when I thirsted, I was given gall to drink ; hell was poured into my heart till I wept poison and sighed forth fire ; they crept after me even into my dreams by night—and there I saw the gruesome larvæ, the noble lacquey-faces with grinning teeth, prominent banker nose, and pale, ruffled hands holding bare knives.

Even the old woman who lives near me and is my next wall-neighbour thinks I am mad, especially as the other night in my sleep I gave verbal proof of my madness, and she distinctly heard me when I cried, “Dulcinea is the loveliest woman in the world, and I the most luckless knight upon earth ; but it would not be seemly that my weakness should deny this truth—strike home with your lance, knight !”

LATER POSTSCRIPT.

(November 1830.)

I DO not know what strange piety withheld me from softening in the slightest degree certain expressions which, during a later revision of the preceding pages, seemed somewhat too stringent. My manuscript had already turned to that pallid yellow of death, so that I was unwilling to mutilate them.

All writings of bygone years have a prescriptive right to inviolability, and especially these pages which belong in a measure to a very dark past. For they were written almost a year before the third Bourbon hegira, during a time far harder than the hardest possible expression, during a time where everything seemed to indicate that the victory of Freedom would be retarded for a century. It was at least disconcerting to see how our knights put on a certain front, how they caused their faded escutcheons to be repainted, how they tilted with spear and shield in Munich and Potsdam, how they sat so proudly on their stallions as though they would ride to Quedlingbury, as though they were so many bold knights of the olden days of feudal chivalry, or even the heroes of King Arthur's Round Table.

Much more unendurable were the malicious, triumphant little eyes of our canting hypocrites, who knew how to hide their long ears so cunningly under their hoods that we knew to expect some wily tricks. It could not possibly be foreseen that these noble knights would

miss the mark with their arrows, and for the most part in so cowardly a manner, with faces turned backward like flying Baschkirs. As little could it be foreknown that the snake poison of our canting hypocrites would turn them to shame. Oh, it is pitiable also to see how they misused their best poison, for in their rage they threw great pieces of arsenic at our heads instead of quietly shaking it by grains into our soup; or how they rummaged in the children's dirty linen for their enemies' disused swaddling clothes so as to unearth the ordure, and even exhumed the fathers of their enemies out of their graves to see if they had not been circumcised. Oh, the fools! who thought they had discovered that the lion belongs to the feline race, and buzzed about so long concerning this discovery in natural history, until at length the great cat proved upon their flesh his *ex ungue leonem*.

Oh, the dull wights! who would not see clearly until they were strung up at the lantern. I would need to string my lyre with donkey's guts in order worthily to sing the praises of these besotted blockheads!

An overpowering yearning seizes me! While I sit and write, music resounds from under my window, and in the elegiac wrath of the stately melody I recognise the hymn of the Marseillaise with which the beautiful Barbaroux and his companions greeted the city of Paris, that *Ranz des Vaches* of Freedom, whose tones gave home-sickness to the Swiss in the Tuilleries—that triumphant death-song of the Girondist, that old, sweet cradle song. What a song! It thrills me through with fire and joy, and it lights in me brilliant stars of enthusiasm and rockets of mockery. These, indeed, shall not be lacking at the great fireworks of Time. The resounding stream

of flaming song shall pour itself down from the heights of Freedom's heaven in bold cascades, as the Ganges precipitates itself from the Himalaya ! And thou, beautiful Satira, daughter of just Themis and of goat-footed Pan, lend me thine aid ! On thy mother's side thou also art descended from the race of Titans, and, like me, hate the enemies of thy race, the feeble usurpers of Olympus. Lend me thy mother's sword, wherewith I may judge her, the detested bride ; and give me thy father's pipes, that I may pipe her to death.

Already do they hear the deadly piping, and panic fear seizes them, and they flee again, in their animal forms, as they did when we heaped Pelion upon Ossa—

Aux armes, citoyens !

Great injustice is done to us poor Titans when we are blamed for the sullen savageness with which we stormed those heights of heaven. . . . Alas ! down below there, in Tartarus, it was very dark and horrible, and we heard there only the howling of Cerberus and the clang of chains ; and it is to be pardoned, if we seemed somewhat coarse in comparison with those spic-and-span gods who, refined and polished, sat in the brilliantly-lighted *salons* of Olympus, and revelled in the delicious nectar and the sweet concert of the muses.

I can write no further, for the music under my window turns my head, and ever more lustily comes the refrain to me—

Aux armes, citoyens !

CONCLUSION.

(*Written on November 29th, 1830.*)

THOSE were days of repression and stagnation in Germany when I wrote my second book of the *Reisebilder*, and during the period in which the MS. was printed. Before it appeared, however, rumours were already whispered about it in public ; it was said that my book would stir up again the intimidated spirit of Freedom, and measures were taken to suppress it likewise. After such a report it was advisable to push the work more quickly forward, and to run it rapidly through the press. As it had to comprise a certain number of sheets, in order to escape the claims of a highly commendable Censor, I, in my need, imitated Benvenuto Cellini, who, when he had not sufficient bronze for the casting of his "Perseus," cast all his tin plates into the smelting oven for the filling up of the mould. It is certainly easy to distinguish tin—especially the tin end of a book—from the best bronze ; nevertheless, whosoever understands the action will not blame the master. And as everything in this world can happen over again, it so chanced that a similar pressure arose in connection with this book : I was forced to throw a quantity of tin into the casting, and I wish my tin-outpourings to be ascribed solely to the exigencies of the time.

Alas ! the whole book is of a truth the product of the needs of the time, the time-need, as much as were the earlier writings with a similar aim. The nearest friends

of the author, who have cognisance of his private affairs, knew very well how little his own self-seeking constrained him towards the Tribune, and how real are the sacrifices which he must endure for every free word he has spoken, and, if God wills it, will still speak. Now that word is a deed, the consequences thereof cannot be gauged ; therefore no man can know whether in the end he will not have to suffer as martyr for that word. For many years I have waited in vain for the word of that bold orator who, in a gathering of German youths, used so often to harangue about the word, and so often won me by his rhetorical talent and his pregnant, high-sounding speeches; they were then so over-vociferous, now they are silent as the night. How they inveighed in those days against the foreign Babel, and the unpatriotic, frivolous betrayer of his fatherland, who praised the French dominion! That praise justified itself in the great week. Ah, that great week of Paris! The spirit of Freedom which thence wafted over to Germany did indeed here and there overturn certain night-lights, so that the red curtains of a few thrones caught fire, and the gold crowns waxed warm under the blazing nightcaps. The old watchmen, to whom the police affairs of the kingdom are entrusted, however, soon slipped the extinguisher over it, ferreted about the more vigilantly, and forged the secret chains more strongly, and I already perceive that an invisible and thicker prison wall encloses the German people. Poor, imprisoned people, despair not in thy dire need. Oh, that I could speak Katapulta! Oh, that I could shoot Falarika out of my heart!

The rigid crust of ice melts from my heart, a strange

melancholy steals over me—is it love, and only love for the German people? or is it a sickness? My spirit palpitates, my eyes burn. That is an unpropitious circumstance for a writer who ought to control his subject-matter and remain prettily objective, as the art school insists, and as Goethe also did. He thereby reached his eightieth year, and became a minister and wealthy—poor German people! And this is thy greatest man!

I still lack a few last pages. I will therefore take the occasion to relate a story that has been in my head since yesterday. It is a story out of the life of Charles V.¹ But I heard it long ago, and I do not recollect the details with perfect clearness. Such things are easily forgotten when no fixed salary is received for reading these old stories every half-year from exercise-books. But what does it signify if the places and dates of these stories are forgotten, if the inner meaning, the moral thereof, is retained in the memory? It is precisely these which ring in my mind, and move me to tears—I fear I may be ill.

The poor Emperor was taken prisoner by his enemies, and thrown into a wretched prison. I think it was in Tyrol. He sat alone there in all his wretchedness, forsaken by all his knights and his courtiers, and no one came to help him. I do not know if in those days he had the curd-white face with which Holbein represents him in his pictures. But that prominent underlip, the sign of a disdain for mankind, was then, undoubtedly, more protruding than in his pictures. He had good

¹ In the French edition it is more properly called *The Life of the Emperor Maximilian*.

cause to despise the people who fluttered so devotedly around him in the sunshine of his good fortune, and who left him solitary in his obscurity and his misfortune. Suddenly the prison door opened, and a cloaked man entered, and when the cloak was thrown aside the king recognised his faithful Kunz von Rosen, the court fool. This man brought him consolation and advice, and he was the court fool.

“Oh, German Fatherland ! Oh, dear German people ! I am thy Kunz von Rosen. The man, whose peculiar office was to make the time pass for thee, and who only amused you in thy good days, presses into thy prison in the time of thy misfortune. Here, under my cloak, I bring thee thy strongest sceptre, thy beautiful crown. Do you not recognise me, my emperor ? If I cannot free thee, at least will I comfort thee, and thou shalt have some one near thee with whom thou canst speak of thy direful sorrows, one who loves thee, and whose best jokes and best blood are at thy service. For thou, my people, art the true emperor, the rightful lord of the land. Thy will is sovereign, and far more legitimate than that purple vested *Tel est nôtre plaisir*, who invokes a divine right without any other warrant than the foolish prating of tonsured jugglers. Thy will, my people, is the only rightful source of all power. Though thou liest yet in chains, thy right will assert itself at length ; the day of deliverance approaches, a new era begins. My emperor, the night is ended, and out beyond the rosy glow of morning dawns.”

“Kunz von der Rosen, my fool, you deceive yourself. You perchance mistake a glittering axe for the sun, and the morning glow is nought but blood.”

"No, my emperor, it is the sun, though it rises in the west. For six thousand years it has always risen in the east ; it is now full time it should change its course."

"Kunz von der Rosen, my fool, thou hast lost the bells from off thy red cap, and it has now so strange an appearance, that red cap."

"Alas, my emperor, at the thought of thy misfortunes I shook my head so furiously, so severely, that the fool's bells have fallen from the cap ; but it is none the worse therefor."

"Kunz von der Rosen, my fool, what breaks and cracks out there ?"

"Be still ! It is the carpenter's saw and axe, and the doors of your prison will soon be open, and you will be free, my emperor."

"Am I really emperor ? Alas, it is the fool who tells me so !"

"Oh, do not sigh, my dear master. The air of the prison renders you fearful ; when you are reinstated in your power you will again feel the hardy emperor-blood coursing through your veins ; you will be proud as an emperor, and arrogant, and gracious, and smiling and ungrateful as princes are."

"Kunz von der Rosen, my fool, when I am once more free, what will thou do ?"

"I will then sew new bells on my cap !"

"And how shall I recompense thy fidelity ?"

"Ah ! dear master, do not cause me to be killed !"

THE TEA-PARTY.

A HUMOROUS TALE.

(1830.)

THE scene of action of this tale which I am about to relate is once more the Baths of Lucca.

Fear nothing, German reader ; it contains nothing political, but only philosophy, or more correctly a philosophical moral, and upon love. It is really very politic of you, when you wish to hear nothing of politics, that you, nevertheless, experience only what is disagreeable and humiliating. My friends were very indignant with me, and with justice, for having last year busied myself only with politics, and for having even issued political books.

“We shall certainly not read them,” they said ; “but it makes us very anxious that such things should be printed in Germany, in the land of philosophy and of poetry. If you will not dream with us, at least do not waken us out of our sweet sleep. Quit politics, do not squander your precious time thereupon. Do not neglect your pretty talent for love-songs, tragedies, novels, and give us therein your views upon art, or some other good philosophical moral.”

Well then, I will stretch myself as quietly as do the others upon the dreaming pillow and relate my tale. The philosophical moral which it will point out is contained in the following sentence: That we may occasionally be ridiculous without being in the least degree guilty in the matter. To be accurate, I ought to relate these words in the first person singular—yes, I will do so, dear reader, but I beg you not to join in with the laughter which I have not deserved. For is it my fault that I have good taste and that I relish tea? I am a grateful man, and when I was at the Baths of Lucca I gave my landlord high praise for giving me tea, the like of which I had never swallowed.

Very often I had sung this song of praise to Lady Woolen, who lived in the same house with me, and this lady wondered greatly, the more so that she, as she complained, in spite of all entreaties to the landlord, was unable to procure good tea, and was therefore obliged to have it sent to her by Estafette from Leghorn.

“But it is heavenly!” she added, smiling divinely.

“My lady,” I answered, “I wager that mine is still better.”

The ladies who chanced to be present were invited to tea by me, and they promised to appear, the other day, at six o'clock on yonder sunny hill, where we could sit so snugly together and look down over the valley.

The hour came, a little table was laid, bread and butter cut, the ladies chatted agreeably—but no tea came.

Six o'clock struck, half-past six, the evening shadows encircled the foot of the mountain like black snakes, the woods exhaled a moist, earthy odour, the birds twittered

more vehemently—but no tea came. The sun-rays now touched only the tops of the mountains, and I called the ladies' attention to how lingeringly the sun departed, as though loath to quit the presence of their rival sunshine.

It was nicely said—but no tea came. At length, at length, with sighing face, my landlord came and asked if we would not have sorbett instead of tea.

"Tea ! tea !" we all cried in chorus.

"And, moreover, of the same," I added, "that I drink every day."

"Of the same, your excellence? It is impossible."

"Why impossible?" I cried in annoyance.

My landlord became more and more embarrassed. He stammered, he stuttered, and at last the dreadful secret came out.

My good landlord understood the well-known art, namely, of refilling the teapot out of which tea had already been poured, with absolutely boiling water. And the tea, which tasted so good to me, and of which I had prated so much, was no other than the daily second brew of the very tea that my house companion, Lady Woolen, had procured from Leghorn!

The mountains surrounding the woods of Lucca have a renowned echo, and they know well how to reiterate again and again the ringing peal of ladies' laughter.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS ADDRESSED TO M. AUGUST
LEWALD.

(Written in May 1837, from a village near Paris.)

I.

AT last, at last, the weather has made it possible for me to quit Paris and the warm chimney-corner ; and the first hours which I spend in the country I consecrate to you, dear friend. How the sun shines on the paper and goldens the letters which will transmit my warmest greetings to you ! Yes, winter flees away over the mountains, and the malicious zephyrs follow on his heels, like a troop of wanton grisettes who pursue an amorous grey head with mocking laughter, and even with birch switches. How he wheezes and pants, the white-haired dotard ! How the young maidens pitilessly drive him before them ! How the bright bosom-ribbons flicker and glisten ! Here and there a knot falls in the grass. Violets peep out curiously and watch the merry chase with anxious wonderment. The old man, at last, is routed in his flight, and the nightingales sing a song of triumph. Their song resounds so sweet and clear ! At last we can dispense with the Grand Opera, together with Meyerbeer and Duprez ; Nourrit we dispensed with long ago. Sooner or

later everything in this world can be dispensed with, except the sun and myself. For I can imagine no spring without these two, and, moreover, no zephyrs, no grisettes, and no German literature! . . . The whole world would be a yawning void, the shadow of a zero, a flea's dream, a poem of Karl von Streckfuss!

Yes, it is springtide, and I can leave off my under-clothing. The little boys have thrown off their jackets, and are romping in their shirt-sleeves round the great tree which stands near the little village church, and does duty as a clock-tower. The tree is now completely covered with blossoms, and looks like an old grey-haired grandfather smiling quietly in the midst of his fair-haired grandchildren, who dance joyously around him. Now and then he playfully showers white flecks down upon them, and then the boys shout the louder. They are strictly prohibited, on pain of a beating, to pull the bell ropes. Nevertheless, the biggest boy, who ought to set the others a good example, cannot withstand the temptation, and secretly pulls the forbidden rope, and then the bells toll like a grandfatherly admonition.

Later in the summer, when the tree is resplendent with full verdure, and the thick foliage conceals the bells, their tones become mysterious; a strange muffled sound is heard, and the moment they clang, the chattering birds swaying on the branches are silenced, and fly frightened away.

In autumn the sound of the bells is more solemn, much more lugubrious, as hollow as the voice of a ghost. These bells toll with an inexpressibly mournful resonance whenever any one is buried; at every stroke a yellow decaying leaf falls from the tree, and this sonorous leaf-

fall, this vibrant symbol of death, filled me one day with such overpowering sorrow that I wept like a child. This happened last year when Margot buried her husband. He met with an accident in the Seine, when the river had swollen to an unusual extent. For three days and three nights the poor wife rowed about the shores in her boat before she fished up his body and could give him Christian burial. She washed him and dressed him, and laid him in his coffin herself, and in the churchyard she lifted the lid in order to look yet once again at the dead man. She spoke no word and wept no single tear ; but her eyes were bloodshot, and never more shall I forget that white, stone-like face with the blood-rimmed eyes.

But here we have now delicious spring weather ; the sun smiles, the children shout—indeed, louder than is at all necessary. Here, in the little village house in which I spent last year's finest months, I will write you a series of letters upon the French stage, and at the same time, in accordance with your wish, I will not omit a comparison of it with our stage at home. This, however, has its difficulties, for the memory of the German stage world is daily fading from my mind. Of recent theatre-plays, nothing has come under my notice except two tragedies by Immermann—*Merlin* and *Peter the Great*—both of which, *Merlin* on account of its poetry, and *Peter the Great* on account of its political allusions, could certainly not be performed. . . . And picture to yourself my face when, in the packet which contained these creations of a beloved great poet, I also found a volume bearing the title, *Dramatic Works of Ernst Raupach*.

I knew him very slightly by sight, but I had then never read anything by this favourite of German theatre-

managers. A few of his plays I had seen on the boards, and one has difficulty in deciding which suffices the other, whether the author the player, or the player the author. It was the good pleasure of Fate that I should peruse a few comedies by Dr. Ernst Raupach in a foreign country at my leisure. It required great efforts for me to plod through to the last acts. I will pass over his bad witticisms in silence: they are, after all, only made wherewith to flatter the public. The poor wight in the stalls will not fail to say to himself, "I can also make puns like that!" and for this pleasant self-satisfaction he will make his thanks audible to the author. But his style is unendurable to me. I am so spoilt in this respect; a fine taste in conversation, the fluent, light language of good society, has become so absolute a necessity to me, through my long sojourn in France, that the reading of Raupachian comedies causes me a singular feeling of indisposition. His style has a solitary, disjointed, unsociable character about it which is oppressive. The conversation in these comedies is forced; it is always a mere ventriloquistic many-voiced monologue, a weary tirade of pure bachelor thoughts—thoughts which sleep alone, cook their own coffee in the mornings, shave themselves, go out walking alone by the Brandenburg Gate, and pluck flowers for themselves. Whenever he makes women speak, the phrases wear manly breeches beneath their white muslin robes, and smell of tobacco and leather.

But among the blind there is the one-eyed king, and among our bad comic poets Raupach is the best. When I say bad comic poets, I allude only to those poor devils who have their productions performed under the title of

comedy, or, being for the most part comedians, which they perform themselves. But these so-called comedies are only pantomimes spoken with traditional masks—the father, the villain, courtiers, knights, the lover, the beloved, the waiting-maid, the mother, or howsoever they may be called in the contracts of our actors, who are trained to act only such immutable *rôles*, modelled on everyday types. Our German comedy is like the Italian masked comedies, which are one and the same piece under endless superficial variation. The characters and situations are given, and whoever possesses a talent for a play of combinations undertakes the amalgamating of these given characters and situations, and out of them builds up a seemingly new piece, somewhat after the manner in which, with a Chinese puzzle, all kinds of figures are arranged from a definite number of differently shaped wooden blocks. Insignificant men are often dowered with this talent, while the true poet strives for it in vain, whose genius must have free play and knows only how to create living figures, not how to construct wooden blocks. One or two true poets, who gave themselves the thankless task of shaping a new comic mask, came into collision with the actors, who, accustomed to the existing masks, and in order to gloss over their own incapacity or laziness, formed so strong a cabal against the new pieces, that they could not be performed.

The judgment which has escaped me upon the work of Dr. Raupach is possibly biassed by a secret dislike which I feel to the personality of the author. The sight of this man once made me tremble, and that, as you know, is an offence which no prince pardons. You look

at me in amazement; you do not find Dr. Raupach at all so terrible, and you are also unaccustomed to see me tremble before any living man? Such is, however, the case. I once experienced such anxiety in the presence of Dr. Raupach that my knees began to knock together and my teeth to chatter. I cannot look at the engraved face of the author on the leaf opposite to the title-page of the dramatic works of Ernst Raupach without my heart throbbing in my bosom. . . . You look at me with wide-open eyes, dear friend, and I also hear a woman's voice beside you entreating with curiosity, "I beg you to tell me. . . ."

Ah, but it is a long story, and time fails me to tell it to you to-day. Moreover, such a narration would recall too many things which I have willingly forgotten; for instance, those sad days spent in Potsdam and the great sorrow which at that time drove me into solitude. I walked there, utterly alone, in the deserted Sans Souci, under the orange trees of the great staircase. . . . My God! how cloying, how anti-poetic are those orange trees! They look like disguised oak-bushes, and in addition every tree has its number, like an editor of the Brockhause *Conversation Blatte*; and this numbered nature has about it something so artfully wearisome, so ranged by corporal's command, I always imagined to myself that these orange trees snuffed tobacco, as did their defunct lord, old Fritz, who, as you know, became a great hero at the time when Rammler was a great poet. Do not for a moment think that I wish to detract from Frederick the Great's glory! I am fully cognisant of all that he merits from German poetry. Did he not present a white horse to Gellert, and five thalers to Madame Karschin? Did he not, in

order to further German literature, write his own bad poems in the French language? Had he published them in the German language, his august example might have done incalculable harm. The German muse will never forget this service of his.

I was not, as I have said, in an especially cheerful mood at Potsdam, and thus it happened that body and soul took a wager which could torment me the most. Ah, spiritual pain is easier to bear than physical, and if I were, for example, offered the choice between an evil conscience and a bad tooth, I would choose the first. Ach! there is nothing more frightful than toothache! I realised this in Potsdam; I forgot all the agonies of my soul, and determined to travel to Berlin in order to have the decayed tooth extracted there. What a horrible, gruesome operation! It is nearly allied to decapitation! One must sit on a chair and keep rigidly still, and quietly await the awful wrench. My hair stands on end when I even think of it. But Providence in his wisdom has ordered all things for the best, and the pain man suffers contributes in the end to his salvation. Undeniably, toothache is frightful, unbearable; yet a beneficent, righteous Providence has given this frightful, unbearable character to toothache, so that we may at last relinquish doubt and fly to the dentist and allow our tooth to be wrenched out. Assuredly no one would consent to this operation, or I should say to this execution, if toothache were in the least degree endurable!

You have no conception in what depressed, miserable condition I sat through that three hours' journey in the post-coach. When I reached Berlin I was almost broken to bits; and as one in such a moment has no consideration

whatever for money, I gave the postillion a tip of twelve good groschens. The fellow looked at me with a strange, undecided expression, for, according to the new Nagler post regulations, postillions are strictly forbidden to take any tips. He held the twelve-groschen piece in his hand a long time, as though he were weighing it, and before he pocketed it he said in melancholy tones: "I have been postillion for twenty years, and I am used to having tips, and now all at once we are strictly forbidden by the Herr Ober Post Director to take anything from the passengers on pain of severe punishment; but it is an inhuman law, no man can refuse a tip, it is contrary to nature!" I pressed the honest man's hand and sighed. Sighing I reached an inn, and when there I immediately inquired about a good dentist. The innkeeper answered most joyfully: "That is excellent; a celebrated dentist from St. Petersburg has just put up here, and if you dine at *table d'hôte* you will see him." Yes, I thought, I will take the last meal of the condemned before I sit in the stool of expiation. But at table all desire to eat failed me. I was hungry, but had no appetite. In spite of my pliable humour, I could not rid myself of the thought of the horror which the next hour had in store for me. Even my favourite dish, lamb with little Teltower turnips, repelled me. My eyes involuntarily sought out the dreadful man, the dentist-executioner from St. Petersburg, and with the instinct of anxiety I soon singled him out among the guests. He sat far from me, at the end of the table; he had an odd, crooked face, a profile like the tooth-extracting pincers. He was an uninteresting fellow in an ash-grey coat with glittering steel buttons.

I hardly dared look in his face, and when he took a fork in his hand I was as alarmed as though he were nearing my jaw with the lever. With throbbing anxiety I turned away from his look, and I would also have willingly stopped my ears in order not to hear the tone of his voice. By these tones I observed that he was one of those people whose bodies are inwardly painted grey, and who have wooden entrails. He spoke of Russia, where he had long dwelt, but where his art found no sufficient scope. He spoke with that quiet, impertinent reservation which is more unendurable than loud-voiced boasting. Every time he spoke my courage evaporated and my soul trembled. In my perturbation I threw myself into conversation with my neighbour; and while I anxiously turned my back upon the terrible one, I spoke in such self-deafening tones that I drowned the sound of the unwelcome voice. My neighbour was an amiable man, of good position, of finest manners, and his affable conversation alleviated the painful condition in which I was. He was discretion itself. The words fell softly from his gracefully arched lips, his eyes were clear and friendly, and when he heard that I suffered from an aching tooth he blushed and offered me his services.

“In God’s name,” I cried, “who are you then?”

“I am the dentist Mejer, from St. Petersburg,” he answered.

I hitched my chair with almost rude haste away from him, and stammered in great embarrassment, “Who, then, is the man across the table down there, with the ash-grey coat and the glittering steel buttons?”

“I do not know,” answered my neighbour, looking

at me in surprise. Then the waiter, who had overheard my remark, whispered with great importance in my ear, "That is the Herr Theatre-Poet, Raupach."

II.

. . . OR is it true that we Germans are really unable to produce a good comedy? that we are condemned to all eternity to borrow such poems from the French?

I hear that you also have for long tormented yourself over this question, to such a point as to have set a price upon the head of the best comic poet. As I understood, you yourself, dear Lewald, made one of the jury, and Baron Cotta shut you all up without tobacco and without beer until you had decided upon your dramatic verdict. At least you have thereby gained material for a good comedy.

Nothing is more futile than the reasons which are advanced wherewith affirmatively to settle the said question. It is maintained, for example, that the Germans have no good comedy, because they are a serious people; whereas the French, a gay people, are more naturally disposed towards comedy. This proposition is completely erroneous. The French are in nowise a gay people. I begin to believe, on the contrary, that Lawrence Sterne was right when he declared that they were too serious. And then, when Yorick wrote his sentimental journey in France, it was the golden age of frivolity, and of the perfumed trifling of the ancient *régime*: the guillotine and Napoleon had not then taught France the necessary art of reflection. And now, since

the days of the July Revolution, what an aggravating progress they have made in seriousness, as, to put it better, in the abstinence from gaiety! Their faces have lengthened, their mouths are pursed; they have learnt from us to smoke and to philosophise. They have undergone a great metamorphosis; they are no longer themselves. Nothing is more pitiable than the prating of our Teutomaniacs, who, when they inveigh against the French, have always before their eyes the French of the empire, whom they have seen in Germany. It does not occur to them that this changeable people, whose inconstancy they attack ceaselessly, has been unable during the last twenty years to remain immutable in the matter of ideas and sentiments!

No, the French are not gayer than we are. We Germans have more disposition and aptitude for the comic, we are the people of humour. Moreover, in Germany more laughable subjects are found, characters more truly ridiculous than in France, where society *persiflage* blights every unusual absurdity in the germ, and where no sort of original can develop and flourish unhindered. We can assert with pride that it is only on German soil that fools of titanic height can shoot up, of whom a superficial early stunted French fool has no conception. Germany alone produces these colossi of folly, whose belled-caps reach to the heavens, and rejoice the stars with their tinkling! Let us guard against contempt for indigenious merit, in order to render homage to the foolishness of strangers. Let us not be unjust to our fatherland.

It is certainly a mistake to attribute the sterility of the German Thalia to the lack of free air; or, if I may be

allowed the frivolous word, to the lack of political freedom. That which is called political freedom is in no wise necessary to the prosperity of comedy. If one recalls Venice, where, in spite of the leaden chambers and the secret drownings, Goldoni and Gozzi created their masterpieces; or Spain, where, despite the absolutist axe and the orthodox stake, those delightful cloak and dagger pieces were devised; if one thinks of Molière, who wrote under Louis XIV.; even China possesses excellent comedies. . . . It is not the political condition which influences the growth of comedy with a people; and I could establish this thoroughly were I not afraid of being drawn upon ground which I prefer to avoid. Yes, dear friend, I fight shy of politics, and at every political thought I stride ten steps out of the way, as at the sight of a mad dog. When in the chain of my thoughts I unexpectedly meet with a political idea, I rapidly recite the formula. . . .

Do you know, my dear friend, the correct formula to repeat at the moment of meeting with a mad dog? I have not forgotten it since my childhood, when I learnt it from the old Chaplain Asthower. When we went for a walk, and caught sight of a dog whose tail was bent in an equivocal manner, we repeated rapidly, "O dog, O dog,—Thou art not sane;—Thou art cursed—To all eternity—From thy bite—May my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ protect me. Amen!"

As with politics, I have a boundless dread of theology, which has satiated me with vexation. I will no longer be lured by Satan; I restrain myself even from all reflections upon Christianity, and I am not such a fool as to wish to convert Hengstenberg and Company to

pleasures here below. These unhappy ones may, if they choose, eat thistles instead of pine apples, and mortify their flesh till the end of their days. So much the better. I will myself willingly provide them with the necessary rods. Theology has played me a bad turn, and you know through what misunderstanding. You know how, without having solicited it, I have been placed before the German Diet by "Young Germany," and how I have, till this present day, vainly requested my dismissal. In vain I have addressed the most humble petitions, in vain I assert that I believe no longer in my religious errors. . . . All of no use ! I do not ask a groschen of pension ; but I long to be placed in non-activity. Dear friend, you will do me a great service if you will, on occasion, attack me for obscurantism and servilism ; it may be of use to me. As for my enemies, I have no need to beg such a service from them ; they anticipate my wishes with continual calumnies. . . .

I observe, finally, that the friends with whom comedy thrives better than with us cannot attribute this fact to their political freedom. I may perhaps be permitted to point out somewhat more fully that in France comic poets owe their supremacy much more to the existing social conditions.

You know what I mean by "social conditions." I mean the manners and customs, the actions, the whole public as well as private life of the people, in so far as the prevailing aspects of life are thereby expressed. The French comic poet rarely uses the public life of the people as his principal subject—he cares only to use isolated moments thereof ; from this ground he merely plucks a foolish flower here and there wherewith to crown the

mirror, out of whose ironical polished facets laughs the private life of the French. Caricatures they certainly are which this mirror depicts for us ; but as everything with the French becomes violent exaggeration or caricature, so does this caricature present to us the pitiless truth, and if it be not the truth of to-day, it is assuredly the truth of to-morrow. The comic poet draws more material out of the contrasts existing between the many old institutions and the customs of to-day, between many of the customs of to-day and the secret ways of thought of the people. Especially fruitful for him, moreover, is the opposition, which comes delightfully to light when the noble enthusiasm, which is so easily set aflame and is equally easily extinguished in the French, collides with the positive industrial tendencies of the day. We stand here on ground on which the great despot, the Revolution, has wielded its arbitrary powers for fifty years—here tearing down, there beautifying, but everywhere shaking social life to its very roots ;—and this rage for equality, which cannot raise the lowly, but merely flatten the prominent ; this strife of the present with the past, which mutually upbraid one another ; this quarrel of a madman with a ghost ; this overthrow of all authority, spiritual as well as material ; this stumbling over the last fragment thereof ; and this imbecility in terrible fateful days, wherein the necessity of an authority becomes obvious, and wherein the destroyer is fearful of his own work, and begins to sing out of anxiety, and finally laughs outright. . . . Look you, this is frightful, in some respects unbearable ; but for comedy, it is unsurpassable.

Now, a German would hardly be in his element here.

By the eternal gods ! we ought daily to thank our Lord and Saviour that we have no such comedy as have the French ; that with us no flowers grow which can only blossom on a mountain of potsherds on a heap of ruins ; such as is French society ! The French comic poet to me is like a monkey who sits on the ruins of a destroyed town, pulls grimaces, and raises his simpering laugh if out of the broken arches of the cathedral the head of a real fox peeps out, if in the boudoir of the king's mistress a real sow lies in childbed, or if the ravens hold grave council on the pinnacles of the corporation house, or even if hyenas turn over the old bones in graves of princes. . . .

I have already observed that in France the principal subjects of comedies are drawn, not from the public, but from the private relationships of the people ; and of these the relations between man and woman is the favourite theme. In the family, as in all other aspects of French life, all ties are loosened, all authority is destroyed. It is easy to conceive that respect for parents is ruined in children, when one thinks of the corrosive force of criticism which is the outcome of material philosophy. This lack of piety influences still more pointedly the relationships between man and wife in those legitimate or illegitimate unions which here assume a character especially suitable to the exigencies of comedy. Here is the original theatre of all those wars between the sexes which are only known to us in Germany by bad translations or imitations, wars which a German can describe *à la* Polybius, but never as *à la* Cæsar. As a matter of fact, husband and wife, as well as man and woman generally, war with one another in all countries ; but

everywhere, except in France, the fair sex is deprived of liberty of movement, and the war is carried on in private, and cannot become an exterior and dramatic subject. Elsewhere women can only make a little disturbance, at most an insurrection; but here the married couple is armed with equal forces, and wage frightful domestic combats. With your uniformity of German life you amuse yourselves greatly in a German theatre watching the campaigns of the two sexes, wherein the one tries to dupe the other by artful strategy, secret ambuscades, nocturnal surprises, ambiguous armistices, sometimes even by treaties of eternal peace. But here, in France, you are on the field of battle itself, where all these things take place not only in semblance, but in reality; and if German sentiment rules your heart, your pleasure in even the best French comedies is spoilt. Alas! I have long since ceased to laugh over Arnal, when with admirable absurdities he plays the part of a deceived husband. And I laugh no longer over Jenny Vertjéré when she develops all the graces of a great lady, and dallies with the flowers of adultery. And I cannot even laugh over Mademoiselle Dejazet, who, as you are aware, knows so admirably how to play the *rôle* of grisette with exemplary effrontery and adorable shamelessness. How many checks in the paths of virtue must that woman have suffered to reach such triumph in the domains of art! She is perhaps the best actress in France. She is inimitable in the *rôle* of Fetillon, a poor dressmaker who, through the liberality of a rich lover, sees herself suddenly surrounded with all the luxury of a great lady; or as a little *blanchisseuse*, who listens for the first time to the tender addresses of a sawbones (in German, *studiosus*

medicinæ), and allows herself to be taken by him to a *bal champêtre* of the Grand Chaumière. . . . Ah, all that is very amusing and very funny, and people laugh there-over; but I, when I reflect where such comedies in reality end—that is to say, in the gutter of prostitution, in the hospital of Saint Lazare, on the anatomical table, where the sawbones not unfrequently sees the former partner of his love and pleasure dissected in a learned manner, . . . the laughter is strangled in my throat; and were I not afraid of appearing a fool before the most cultured public in the world, I would be unable to restrain my tears.

Look you, my dear friend, it is an effect of the secret curse of exile that we never feel quite at home in a foreign atmosphere; that, with our national opinions and sentiments, we remain isolated among a people who think and feel quite otherwise than ourselves; that we are continually wounded by the moral, or rather the immoral, appearances to which the natives have adjusted themselves, and to which habit renders them as insensible as to the natural features of their country. . . . Alas! the moral climate of the foreigner is more unhealthy for us than the physical climate; yes, to this it is easier to accommodate oneself, which at most indisposes the body, but not the soul!

A revolutionary frog, who longed to emerge from his swamp, and looked upon the existence of the birds of the air as the ideal of liberty, was unable to live long in the dry, the so-called free air, and certainly sighed very soon for his thick, heavy birth-swamp. At first he swelled himself out, and joyously saluted the sun which has such brilliancy in the month of June. Then he said

to himself: "I am greater than my country people, the fish, the stock-fish, the mute water creatures. Jupiter has granted me speech—I am even a singer, and I already feel thereby my affinity to the birds; I only lack wings." . . . Poor frog! and if he had wings he would not be able to soar over all things. In the air the lightness of the bird would fail him; he would turn his eyes involuntarily earthwards. At that height all the sorrows of this valley of lamentations would become much more apparent to him, and the feathered frog would then experience anguish greater than he had previously suffered in the German swamp.

III.

My brain is heavy and confused. I hardly slept at all last night. I constantly tossed from side to side in my bed, and continuously turned the following thought over in my head, "Who was the masked executioner who decapitated Charles I. in Whitehall?" Only towards morning did I fall asleep, and I dreamed that it was night, and that I stood alone on the *Pont-neuf* in Paris, and that I looked down into the dark waters of the Seine. Down there, between the piers of the bridge, appeared naked men, waist high above the water, who held lighted lamps in their hands, and seemed to search for some object. They looked up at me with a significant air, and, for myself, I nodded signs of mysterious intelligence down to them. . . . Finally, the great clock of Notre Dame struck, and I awoke. And now, for a whole hour, I have been racking my

brains as to what those naked men might be searching for under the *Pont-neuf*? I think I knew it in my dream, but have since then forgotten.

The glittering morning mists give promise of a fine spring day. The cock crows. The old pensioner who lives near us is already seated at his house door, and hums his Napoleonic songs. His bare-legged grandchild, a fair-haired boy, is already running about. At this moment he is standing below my window holding in his little hand a piece of sugar, with which he wants to feed the roses. A sparrow hops around him on its tiny feet, and watches the child as if curiously and admiringly. But the mother comes in haste, the beautiful peasant woman lifts the child on her arm and carries him into the house so that he may not catch cold in the morning air.

I, however, take up my pen in order to scribble down for you my confused ideas on the French theatre in a still more confused style. It will be difficult, my dear friend, for you to find anything instructive in this written wilderness. To you, dramaturgist, who knows the theatre under all its aspects, and the comedian into his very entrails as the good God sees into us men; to you, who on that stage which is called the world have already lived, loved, and suffered, as has the good God himself in this world; to you I cannot well say anything new upon the French theatre, or upon the German theatre either. I will restrict myself to hazarding one or two fugitive observations which shall win a friendly nod-of the head from you.

For the same reason I hope that the ideas in my preceding letter on French comedy have met with

your approval. The moral accord, or more properly the disaccord, between husband and wife is, in France, the manure which most fruitfully enriches the soil of comedy. Marriage, and still more adultery, is the point of departure of all these comic rockets which shoot up so brilliantly into the air, but leave a melancholy darkness, if not a bad odour, behind them. The old Catholic religion, which sanctioned marriage and menaced the unfaithful partner with hell, is here extinguished together with the fires of hell. Morality, which is nought else than religion passed into customs and manners, has thus lost all its vital roots, and attaches itself now, dejected and withered, to the barren supports of reason which have been planted there for it in the place of religion. But here this pitiful, rootless morality, supported on reason only, is not even decently respected. Society pays homage only to that outward decorum which is the appearance of morality, the care to avoid whatever may bring about a public scandal. I say a public, not a private, scandal, for nothing scandalous exists for society which is not apparent. It punishes sin only when tongues murmur too loudly, and even then certain temperaments are indulgent. The sinner receives complete condemnation only when her husband himself pronounces her guilt. The doors of French saloons open to the most notorious Messalina, provided her horned conjugal partner walks patiently beside her. But the young girl who, misled by generous impetuosity, sacrifices herself in the arms of a lover, is banished from society to all perpetuity. It is true that this rarely happens—first, because girls in this country never love; and secondly, because in love-matches they endeavour to marry as soon as possible, in order to

enjoy that liberty which is only accorded to married women.

That is the point of difference with us in Germany, as in England, and in other Germanic lands, for there all possible liberty is accorded to girls, while married women enter into the most absolute dependence upon, and under the strict guardianship of, their husbands. Here, in France, as I have said, the contrary is the case; young girls remain here in the seclusion of the cloister until they are married. In the world—that is to say, in the French *salons*—they remain silently seated, and little notice is taken of them, for it is bad form and imprudent to pay court to an unmarried young lady. That is the essential difference. The Germans, and our Germanic cousins, especially the English, offer our homage to the unmarried young girl; it is of her our poets sing. With the French, on the contrary, it is the married woman who is the object of love in life as in art.

I have thus indicated a fact which constitutes a radical difference between French tragedy and German tragedy. The heroines of German tragedies are always young girls; in France they are always married women, and the resulting complications open up, perhaps, a wider field for action and passion.

It would never occur to me to praise German and French tragedy at the expense of one another. The literature and art of every country are the product of special conditions which should not be overlooked in comparative estimate. The merit of German tragedies, such as those of Goethe, Schiller, Kleist, Immermann, Grabbe, Oehlenschläger, Uhland, Grillparzer, Werner, and other great poets, consists more in their poetry than

in their action and passion. But, however exquisite the poetry may be, its effect on a solitary reader is greater than on a large assembly. In a theatre that which carries away the spectators is exactly action and passion, and this is where the French tragic poets excel. The French, by nature, are more active and more passionate than we are, and it is difficult to decide whether it is the innate action which stirs passion in them to greater prominence than with us, or if it is their natural passion which imparts to their actions a more ardent character, and to their whole lives a more dramatic form, than to ours, whose still waters flow quietly within the custom-bound bed, and are characterised by depth rather than by agitation. In short, life in France is more dramatic, and the theatre, the mirror of life, represents passion and action to the highest degree.

Passion, as conceived in the French tragedies, that continuous storm of feeling, that alternation of thunder and lightning, that eternal fever of sensibility, is appropriate to the requirements of a French public. For the German public, however, the author must first indicate at length the motive of these mad outbreaks of passion, then introduce quiet pauses, which permit the spectator to recover quiescence, must adapt short spaces of rest to our mind and our feelings, in order that we may be touched comfortably and without brusqueness. Peace-loving citizens and government officials sit in the German *parterre* to digest their *sauerkraut* quietly, and in the boxes blue-eyed, well-bred young girls sit, beautiful blonde souls who have brought their knitting or some other kind of needlework to the theatre, and like to lose themselves softly in their dreams, without being

made to drop a sudden stitch; and all spectators possess that German virtue, the innate, or at all events acquired, virtue of patience. With us also the theatre is frequented in order that we may criticise the acting of the comedians, or, as we express it, the rendering of their artistic intuitions, and it is this which forms the subject of discussion in our *salons* and journals. A Frenchman goes to the theatre to see the piece in quest of fresh emotions; the representer is quite forgotten in the representation, there is little or no question of him at all. Unrestfulness drives the Frenchman to the theatre, and quietude is the last thing he demands from it. If it allow him a moment of calm he would be capable of calling for Azor—that is to say, to hiss.

The important point for the dramatic poet in France is to manage so that his public shall not be conscious of itself for a moment, that the emotions shall follow one another blow after blow, so that love, hatred, ambition, jealousy, pride, *le point d'honneur*, in short, all the passionate sentiments already unleashed in the actual life of the French shall break out in still madder violence on the boards.

But in order to decide if the exaggeration of passion be too great in the French drama, if all limits be not overstepped, a profound knowledge of the French life which has served as model to the poet is necessary. In order to subject French pieces to just criticism they must be judged by French and not by German standards. Passions, which appear to us absolute exaggeration when we see or read a French piece in a quiet corner of Germany, are perhaps the true expression of real life, and that which repels us as false in the theatrical form

happens in Paris every day, every moment, in veritable bourgeois reality. No, it is impossible in Germany to estimate correctly this French passion. We see the actions, we hear the words, but these actions and words throw us into astonishment, awake in us a remote glimmer perhaps, but they never give us an exact understanding of those feelings of which they are the expression. He who wishes to know what burning is must hold his hand in the fire ; the sight of one burning is not sufficient, and nothing would be more inadequate than to seek to know the nature of flame from hearsay or from books. People who live in the north pole of human communities have no conception with what facility hearts are inflamed in the burning climate of French society ; how, for example, in the July days heads are liable to the most violent sunstrokes. When we hear their cries, and see the contortions of their faces, when these flames consume their brain and heart, we shake our head and declare it all to be monstrous or sheer madness.

As we in Germany cannot understand the perpetual storm and stress of passion in the works of French poets, so the French find the calm, homely existence, that dream-life full of memories and presentiments which continually permeates even the most passionate creations of the German poets, equally incomprehensible. Men, who think that to-day is sufficient unto itself, who accord the highest value to the present, and know how to profit by it with the most astonishing certainty, such men can in nowise understand the sentiments of a people who have only a yesterday and a to-morrow, but no to-day, who unceasingly recall the past and presage the future,

but never know how to seize the present moment, either in love or in politics. They watch us with amazement, how we Germans, often for seven long years, woo the blue eyes of the beloved one before we venture to encircle her waist with a resolute arm. They watch with surprise how we first thoroughly study the whole history of the French Revolution, together with all the commentaries, and await the last supplements, before we translate this work into German, before we publish an *édition de luxe* on the rights of man, with a dedication to the King of Bavaria. . . .

"O dog, O dog,—Thou art not sane; thou art cursed to all eternity. From thy bite protect me, my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen!"

IV.

THE Lord will order all for the best. He, without whose will no sparrow can fall from the roof, and no Government-Councillor Karl Streckfuss can make verses, will not relinquish the fate of a whole people to the arbitrariness of pitiable shortsightedness. I am persuaded that He who once brought forth the children of Israel out of Egypt with great miracles, out of the land of caste and deified oxen, that He will also show his wonder-working power to the Pharaohs of to-day. He will, from time to time, repulse the prayer of the arrogant Philistine, as once from the judgment-seat. And also the new Babylonish harlot, she shall be rebuffed! Canst thou see it, God's will? It passes through the air like the dumb secrets of a telegraph, which conveys

its tidings of wisdom high above our heads, while the uninitiated live in the turmoil of the market, heedless that their most important interests, war and peace, are being arranged unseen above them in the air. If one of us see into the height, and be a reader of portents, and understand the signs on the towers, and warn the people of approaching evil, then they call him a dreamer, and jeer at him. Sometimes yet worse befalls him, and they whom he has warned rate him for his bad tidings, and stone him. Sometimes, moreover, the prophet is set upon the battlements until the prophecy be fulfilled, and he may sit there long. For of a surety the good God does ever what He devises and knows to be best, but He never hastens.

O Lord! I know that thou art wisdom and rectitude itself, and that what thou doest will ever be right and wise. But I pray thee, what thou doest, do it a little quickly. Thou art eternal, and hast time enough and can wait. But I am mortal, and I die.

This morning, dearest friend, I am in a singularly gentle mood. The spring exercises a strange influence over me. During the day I am lethargic, and my soul slumbers. But during the night-time I am so excited that I cannot fall asleep till after dawn, and then I am beset with deliciously tormenting dreams. O pain-fraught happiness! with what poignant anguish thou pressed me to thy bosom a few hours ago! I dreamed of her, her whom I will not, dare not, love, and yet of whom the impassioned thought makes my secret bliss. It was in her country-house, in her little shaded room, where the wild oleanders overtop the balcony. The window was open, the brilliant moon shone in upon us, and threw its

silver radiance upon the white arms that encircled me. We were silent, and dreamed only of our sweet misery. The shadow of the trees, whose blossoms exhaled ever stronger fragrance, swayed on the walls. Out in the garden the distant, then approaching, tones of a violin resounded,—sustained, long drawn-out sounds, now sad, now joyous, sometimes with mournful sobbing, sometimes with ominous mutterings, but always delightful, beautiful, and true. . . . “Who is that?” I whispered softly. “It is my brother who plays the violin.” But soon, after the violin had ceased, we heard in its stead the sighs of a flute, whose tones vibrated so beseechingly, so resignedly, so wearily, so mysteriously mournful, that they filled the soul with an eerie foreboding, and conjured up the thoughts of terrible things, of life without love, of death without resurrection, of tears that cannot be shed. . . . “Who is that?” I whispered low. And she answered, “It is my husband who plays the flute.”

My friend, worse than the dreaming, is the awakening.

How happy are the French! They never dream. This I have definitely ascertained; and this circumstance explains why they transact their daily affairs with such wideawake certainty, and never indulge in nebulous, twilight thoughts and feelings either in art or in life. In the tragedies of our great German poets, dreams, presentiments, play, as I have said, an important *rôle*, such as the French tragic poets have not the least conception. All that is to be seen thereof in the modern works in France answers neither to the natural sentiments of the author, nor to those of the public; it is only felt after the German manner, and indeed in the end it is perhaps only the feeblest of thefts. For the French do not

limit themselves to plagiarising poetical thoughts and figures, ideas and perceptions, but also steal from us our emotions, our dispositions, and the state of our souls ; they commit plagiary of sentiment. This may be observed principally among those of them who copy the sentimental verbiage of the Catholic-romantic school of the time of Schlegel.

The French, with very rare exceptions, cannot belie their education. They are all more or less materialists according to whether they have received more or less of this French education, the product of materialistic philosophy. Moreover, the charm of *naïveté*, sentiment, intuitive revelation, and the identification of oneself with nature, are denied to their poets. They have only reflection, passion, and sentimentality.

I would fain, at this point, venture an observation which may prove of value in the appreciation of many of our German authors : Sentimentality is a product of materialism. The materialist, in short, carries in his soul the vague consciousness that everything in this world is not matter. His understanding may strive its utmost to demonstrate to him the materiality of all things, yet his soul revolts therefrom by instinct. He is at times tormented with secret need to recognise a purely spiritual origin of things ; and these vague longings and desires produce that vague sensibility which we call sentimentality. Sentimentality is the doubt of the materialist, who, unable to be all in all to himself, dreams in an indefinite, abortive manner of some better sphere. And, as a matter of fact, I have found that it was just these sentimental authors who, when at home, or when wine had loosened their tongues, were those who gave

vent to their materialism in the grossest terms. The sentimental tone, especially when it is garnished with patriotic, moral, and religious tinsel, passes with the great public as the sign of a beautiful soul !

France is the land of Materialism. It manifests itself in all the occurrences of public and private life. Many fine spirits, it is true, endeavour to eradicate it, but these efforts are attended with still more deplorable results. Into this harrowed ground fall the seeds of these spiritualistic errors which spread their poisonous exhalations over France.

My anxiety increases every day concerning the crisis which this social condition of France may bring about. If the French gave the slightest thought to the future, they could not calmly enjoy their actual situation. And, truly, they never do enjoy the present moment calmly. They do not take their ease at the banquet of life, but, on the contrary, they rapidly swallow the delicate viands, and hastily toss the wines over their throats, and can never devote themselves leisurely to enjoyment. They remind me of the old woodcut in our Family Bible, in which the children of Israel are represented, before their exodus from Egypt, celebrating the feast of the Passover, and standing to eat of the prepared lamb, while ready equipped for the journey, and with staves in their hands. If in Germany the pleasures of life are more sparingly meted out to us, it is at least granted to us to enjoy them in the most comfortable tranquillity. Our days slip past smoothly, like a hair which is drawn through milk.

This last comparison, dear Lewald, is not my own ; it is an old rabbi's. I read it lately in an anthology of rabbinical poetry, wherein the rabbi compared the life

of the just man to a hair drawn through milk. At first this simile nauseated me a little, for nothing acts more deleteriously on my stomach than to find a hair in the milk when I take my morning coffee ; and more especially a long hair which can be lengthily drawn out like the life of the just man. But this is one of my idiosyncrasies ; I will accustom myself to the figure, and will use it on all occasions. A writer should never be in bondage to his own subjectivity ; he should be able to write everything, even if evil results to him therefrom.

The life of a German resembles a hair which is drawn through milk. Indeed, the comparison might be rendered yet more perfectly by saying : the German people resemble a tail of thirty millions of hairs plaited together, which floats peaceably in a great pot of milk. I could keep half of the figure, and compare French life to a pot of milk into which thousands and millions of flies have fallen, who strive each to rise on the back of the other, and end by all being drowned, with the exception of a few who, either by chance or dexterity, have succeeded in reaching the rim of the pot and crawl along the dry edge, but with wet wings.

I have here, for particular reasons, made but very few observations on the social condition of the French ; how the actual complications will be solved no man can guess. Perhaps France nears the brink of a terrible catastrophe. They who begin a revolution are usually its victims, and such a fate may be in store for a nation as well as for individuals. The French people, who began the great revolution in Europe, will perhaps perish, while the nations which followed it will gather the fruits of their initiative actions.

Let us hope that I am in error. The French people is the cat which never breaks its neck, no matter from what height it may fall, but always lands on its feet.

To tell you the truth, dear Lewald, I do not know if it is proved by natural history that cats always fall on their four paws without hurting themselves, as I have heard it said when I was young. I wished once to make the experiment, and clambered up on the roof with our cat, and threw it from that height into the street. By ill luck a Cossack was passing in front of the house at that moment, and the poor cat fell just on the point of his lance, and the Cossack rode lustily away with the spiked cat. If it be true that cats always fall on their feet unharmed, in such cases they must at least beware of Cossack lances. . . .

I have said, in my previous letter, that it is not the political situation whereby comedy is furthered either in France or Germany. This also applies to tragedy. Indeed, I would go the length of asserting that the political condition of France is even detrimental to French tragedy. The tragic poet has need of a belief in heroism, which is quite impossible in a country where liberty of the press, representative government, and *bourgeoisie* have dominion. For the liberty of the press, which daily throws the most glaring light on the human qualities of a hero, despoils his head of that salutary nimbus which assures to him the blind respect of the poet and the people. I need not point out that, in France, republicanism makes use of the freedom of the press in order to abase by ridicule or calumny all greatness, and utterly to quench all enthusiasm for personalities. This thirst for disparagement is at

present thoroughly gratified by the so-called representative government, that system of fictions which hinders rather than advances the cause of liberty, and permits the rise of no great personality, neither among the people nor upon the throne. For this system—the parody of a true representation of national interests, a mixture of petty electoral intrigues, of petty jealousies, petty virtues, of public insolence, of secret corruption, of official lies—demoralises kings and people alike. Here kings are obliged to act a comedy, to answer insignificant chatter with still emptier commonplace, to smile graciously upon their enemies, to sacrifice their friends, to act indirectly, and to choke all royal, heroic impulses in their breast through the perpetual abnegation of themselves. This belittling of all greatness, this radical annihilation of heroism, is especially the work of that *bourgeoisie*, that middle-class which has attained to power here in France through the overthrow of an hereditary aristocracy, and has triumphantly infused all spheres of life with its cold, narrow, mercantile ideas. Before long all sentiment, all heroic ideas will have become ridiculous in this country, if they have not totally perished. I have certainly no desire to regret the ancient *régime* of a privileged nobility; for it was nothing but a painted putrefaction, a decked and perfumed corpse, for which nothing remained but to lower it gently into its grave, or to throw it by force into its tomb in the case of its wishing to continue its deceptive existence or of its revolt against its burial. But the new *régime* which has replaced the old is yet more repulsive, and, for quite contrary reasons, equally unendurable to us is this unvarnished vulgarity, this life devoid of perfume,

this industrious knighthood of money, this national guard, this armed fear which runs you through with an intelligent bayonet if you dare to maintain that the government does not belong to the small commercial mind, to the highly-taxed calculating talent—but rightfully to genius, to beauty, to love, to strength. The men of brains, who worked so indefatigably during the eighteenth century to prepare the French Revolution, would blush if they saw how personal interest has built its miserable huts on the site of the overthrown palaces, and how from the huts a new aristocracy emerges, which, more displeasing than the old, does not attempt to legitimise itself by an idea, by faith in hereditary virtue, but bases its final reason on the acquisitions that are usually due to a narrow perseverance, if not to the most ignoble qualities.

A close observation of this aristocracy, nevertheless, discloses certain analogies between it and the ancient aristocracy such as the latter showed itself to be in the days preceding its death. The privilege of birth was supported by papers which proved, not the excellence, but the number of its ancestors. It was a sort of birth paper-money, which gave the nobles, under Louis XV. and Louis XVI., their sanctioned value, and classed them according to different degrees of consequence, in the same manner in which the commercial papers of to-day under Louis Philippe assign their value to manufacturers, and give them their rank. It is the Bourse which here decides the dignity and degree of rank which these title-papers endorse, and in this matter evinces a conscientiousness equal to that of the sworn genealogist who, in the last century, examined

the diplomas which the nobles produced in proof of their rank.

This money-aristocracy, although it, like the former hereditary aristocracy, has formed a hierarchy, in which each member thinks himself better than another, have nevertheless a certain *esprit-de-corps*; in times of need they hold solidly together, make sacrifices if the honour of the corporation is at stake, and, as I hear, form aid societies for those of their own rank who have come down in the world.

I am in a bitter mood to-day, my friend, and mistrust even that spirit of benevolence which the new noble shows to light more than the old. I say shows to light, for this benevolence is not shy of the effulgence of day, but shows itself best in bright sunshine. This benevolence is to the modern money noble what condescension was to the former hereditary noble—a praiseworthy virtue, whose practice wounded our feelings, and appeared to us at times as a refinement of insolence. Oh, I hate the benevolent millionaire far more than the rich miser who conceals his treasure with anxious care under lock and bolt. He insults us less than the philanthropist who in full publicity throws us a few mites as alms, which he has won from us through profiting by our needs and distresses.

V.

My neighbour, the old grenadier, sits pensively before his house door to-day; from time to time he begins one of his old Bonapartist songs, but emotion intercepts his voice; his eyes are red, and, to all appearances, the old fellow has wept.

It is because he went yesterday to Franconi's, and there saw the battle of Austerlitz. He quitted Paris at midnight, and the recollections so dominated his soul that he marched back during the night as though in a state of somnambulism, and reached the village this morning to his great astonishment. He enumerated all the faults of the piece to me; for he had himself been at Austerlitz, where the cold was so intense that his rifle froze to his fingers; at Franconi's, on the contrary, the heat was unbearable. He was quite pleased with the powder smoke, and also with the smell of the horses; only he affirms that at Austerlitz the cavalry had not such well-groomed horses. He could not verify exactly if the manœuvres of the infantry were correct, for at Austerlitz, as in every battle, the smoke was so thick that it was scarcely possible to distinguish what was happening in the neighbourhood. But at Franconi's, the smoke, according to the old man, was perfect, and it came so agreeably on his chest that it cured him of his cough.

"And the Emperor?" I asked him.

"The Emperor," answered the old soldier, "he was exactly the same as when in life, in his grey coat, with his little three-cornered hat, and my heart beat in my breast. Ah, the Emperor!" he continued, "God knows how I loved him; I have been often in the fire for him during this life, and even after my death I must go into the fire for him."

Ricon, as the old man was called, pronounced these last words in a sombre, mysterious voice, and it was not the first time that I had heard him use this expression that he should go to hell for the Emperor's sake. As

I solemnly urged him to-day to explain to me these strange words, he related to me the following ghastly story :—

When Napoleon carried Pope Pius VI. away from Rome, and had him conveyed to the high cliff castle of Savona, Ricon formed one of the company of grenadiers who guarded him there. Ample liberty was at first afforded to the Pope. He could leave his apartments unhindered at whatever hour he pleased, and repair to the chapel of the castle where he daily celebrated mass. When on these occasions he passed through the great hall, where the imperial guards were stationed, he held out his hand towards them and gave them his blessing. But one morning the guards received express orders to watch the entrance to the papal chambers more rigidly, and to interdict the Pope's passage through the great hall. The ill-luck befell Ricon to draw the lot which devolved on him the fulfilment of this order, on him who had been born in Brittany and was consequently an arch-catholic, and saw in the imprisoned Pope the true vicar of Christ. Poor Ricon stood as sentinel before the apartments of the Pope when he endeavoured, as usual, to cross the great hall in order to read mass in the castle chapel. But Ricon stepped forward and explained that he had orders not to allow the Holy Father to pass through. Some of the priests in the suite endeavoured in vain to impress upon him what a crime, what a sin, he would commit, what eternal damnation he would bring upon himself if he hindered his Holiness, the Head of the Church, from reading the mass. . . . But Ricon remained immovable. He reminded himself constantly of the impossibility of breaking his orders, and when the Pope finally attempted

to emerge further, he exclaimed resolutely, "In the name of the Emperor!" and drove him back with pointed bayonet. A few days later the severe restriction was removed, and the Pope was allowed, as before, to pass through the great hall on his way to celebrate mass. He again gave his benediction to those present, with the single exception of poor Ricon, on whom since that fatal day he looked with severity, and on whom he turned his back while stretching his hand in blessing towards the others. "And yet I couldn't have acted otherwise," said the old pensioner, when he related to me this ghastly story; "I couldn't act otherwise; I had my orders; I had to obey the Emperor; and upon his command—may God forgive me!—I would have run my bayonet through the body of the Eternal Father himself."

I assured the poor fellow that the Emperor was responsible for all the sins of his great army, which would harm him very little, however, because no devil in hell would dare to touch Napoleon. The old man gave me a ready assent, and alluded as usual with loquacious enthusiasm to the magnificence of the empire, of the imperial days when everything streamed with gold, when everything flourished, whereas to-day everything seemed faded and discoloured. Was the time of the empire in France really as beautiful and as happy an era as the Bonapartists, great and small, from Ricon the pensioner to the Duchesse d'Abrantes, represent to us? I doubt it. The fields lay fallow, and the men were led to slaughter. Everywhere mothers' tears and devastated homes. But these Bonapartists are like the tipsy beggar who made the ingenious remark that as long as he remained sober his dwelling appeared only a miserable

hut, his wife a bundle of rags, and his child a sickly, hungry being; but as soon as he had drank a few glasses of brandy all this misery was suddenly metamorphosed: his hut became a palace, his wife appeared to him a gorgeous attired princess, and his child laughed to him out of its exuberant health. When at times he was censured for his bad management, he asseverated that he had not been given enough brandy to drink, and that his whole household would soon wear a more brilliant aspect. Instead of brandy it was glory, the ambition and the joy of conquest, which intoxicated these Bonapartists to such a degree that they were blind to the real aspect of things during the empire; and now, on every occasion that a lament is uttered over the bad times, they cry: "That will soon change; France will flourish and sparkle if, as formerly, we are given to drink crosses of honour, epaulets, voluntary contributions, Spanish pictures, dukedoms, without stint."

Howsoever it may be, not only the old Bonapartists, but also the great mass of the people, delight to cradle themselves in these illusions, and thus the days of the empire are the poetry of these people: a poetry which still stands in opposition to the commonplace spirit of the victorious *bourgeoisie*. The heroism of the imperial domination is the one thing concerning which the French are still sensitive, and Napoleon is still the only hero in whom they believe.

If you reflect thereupon, dear friend, you will realise the importance of this fact for the French theatre, and the success with which the dramatic authors in this country have such frequent recourse to this solitary well of enthusiasm in the desert of indifference. If in one of

those little vaudevilles of the boulevard a scene from the time of the empire is put forward, or the Emperor appears in person, the piece may be detestable, but applause will not lack; for the heart of the spectator plays its part therein, and they applaud their own sentiments and remembrances. There are couplets wherein are catch-words which affect the brain of Frenchmen like the blow of a club, and others which act like an onion on their lachrymal glands. They cry, weep, and excite themselves at the words—*Aigle Français, soleil d'Austerlitz, Jena, les Pyramides, le grande armée, l'honneur, la vieille garde, Napoléon, . . .* or when the man himself, *l'homme*, makes his appearance at the end of the piece, as *Deus ex machina!* He always has the magic hat on his head, his hands behind his back, and speaks as laconically as possible. He never sings. I have never seen a vaudeville in which Napoleon has sung. All the others sing. I have actually heard old Fritz, *Frédéric le Grand*, sing in a vaudeville, and such bad verses even that one might have thought he himself had made them.

As a matter of fact, the verse in these vaudevilles is atrocious; it is not so, however, with the music, especially in the pieces wherein old timber-leg sings of the military glory, and of the deplorable end of the Emperor. The graceful lightness of tone of the vaudeville then changes into elegiac sentimentality that moves even a German. The villainous text of these complaints is fitted to those well-known melodies to which the people are wont to sing their Napoleonic refrains. These are to be heard everywhere; it would seem as though they floated in the air, or that the birds sing them in the trees. These

elegiac-sentimental melodies run constantly in my head, such as I have heard sung with all manner of accompaniments and variations, by children, young girls, and crippled soldiers. The old blind pensioner of the citadel of Dieppe sings it in the most affecting manner. My dwelling lay at the foot of that citadel, there where it juts into the sea, and for whole nights sometimes the old man would sit on the dark walls and sing the deeds of the Emperor Napoleon. The sea seemed to listen to his song, the word *gloire* floated so solemnly over the waves, that sometimes resounded with a murmur of admiration, and then rolled on their accustomed way, . . . perhaps, when they reached St. Helena, they respectfully greeted the tragic rock, or broke thereon in shuddering anger. Many a night I have stood at my window and listened to him, the old pensioner at Dieppe. I can never forget him. I see him yet, sitting on the old walls, while the moon, emerging from dark clouds, sheds a mournful light upon this Ossian of the empire.

It is impossible to determine the exact importance of Napoleon upon the future of the French stage. Hitherto the Emperor has only figured in vaudevilles or in decorative and scenic pieces. But the goddess of tragedy claims this heroic figure as her own. It is as though Fortuna, who guided his life so strangely, had reserved him as a special gift for her cousin Melpomene. The tragic poets of all times will celebrate the *forte* of this man in prose and verse. French poets are especially attached to this hero, for the French people have entirely broken with their past; they feel no genuine sympathy for the heroes of the feudal and courtesanesque days of

the Valois and the Bourbons, an epoch which inspires many of them with antipathetic hatred. Napoleon, the son of the Revolution, is the one great dominating figure, the only sovereign-hero who can rejoice the heart of new France.

I have now shown, from another point of view, that the political situation in France is not favourable to furtherance of tragedy. If the French wish to treat the subject of the Middle Ages, or the time of the last Bourbons, they can never again wholly free themselves from the influence of a certain party-spirit, and the poet unconsciously makes an anticipatory modern-liberal opposition against the old king or the knight whom he wishes to celebrate. Hence the dissonances which painfully affect a German who has not in actual fact broken with the past, and still more a German poet who is an adherent of the impartiality of the artistic school of Goethe. The last tones of the Marseillaise must die away before the author and the public in France can again find themselves in the necessary mental attitude to the heroes of their earlier history. And even if the soul of the author were purified from all scoræ of hatred, his words would not fall upon impartial ears in the stalls, where men sit who have not forgotten the bloody combats they have fought in under the banner of these heroes who parade the scene. Men cannot relish the sight of fathers, whose sons' heads they have cut off on the *Place de Grève*. This is what interferes with dramatic pleasure. It happens sometimes that the impartiality of the author is so misconstrued that he is accused of anti-revolutionary sentiments. "What is all this knighthood, this fantastic frippery?" calls out the ruffled Republican;

and he cries out anathema on the poet who, according to him, adorns the heroes of olden times with an aureole of sympathy in order to corrupt the people and re-awaken aristocratic sympathies.

Here, as in many other things, a great affinity is manifested between the French Republicans and the old English Puritans. They scold in much the same tone in their polemics on the theatre, with the difference that these infuse religious fanaticism, and those political fanaticism, into their absurd arguments. Among documents belonging to the time of Cromwell there exists a pamphlet by the famous Puritan, Prynne, entitled *Histrio-Mastrix* (printed 1633), out of which I extract for your amusement the following diatribe against the theatre :—

“There is scarce one devil in hell, hardly a notorious sin or sinner upon earth, either of modern or ancient times, but hath some part or other in our stage plays.

“Oh, that our players, our play-hunters, would now seriously consider that the persons whose parts, whose sins they act and see, are even then yelling in the eternal flames of hell, for these particular sins of theirs, even then whilst they are playing of these sins, these parts of theirs on the stage! Oh, that they would now remember the sighs, the groans, the tears, the cries, and shrieks that these wickednesses cause in hell, whilst they are acting, applauding, committing, and laughing at them in the playhouse!”

VI.

MINE own well-beloved friend, I feel, this morning, as though I wore on my head a crown of poppies which lulled my senses and feelings to sleep. Sulkily I shake my head from time to time, and a few stray ideas awake therein, but only to tumble over on the other side again, and to snore as though for a wager. Sallies of wit, the fleas of the brain which spring up between the slumbering thoughts, are not especially lively, but are rather more sentimental and dreamy. Is it the spring air, or the different manner of living, which produces this torpor? Here, I go to bed about nine o'clock without being tired. Far from enjoying a sound sleep which enchains the whole body, I toss all night in a sort of somnolent hallucination. In Paris, on the contrary, where I could not go to bed till long after midnight, my sleep was of iron. I did not rise from dinner till about eight o'clock, and then we usually drove off to the theatre. Dr. Detmold from Hanover, who spent last winter in Paris, always accompanied us and kept us lively, even when the piece was of the nature of a soporific. We laughed much, criticised much, and talked much scandal together. Be not disturbed, dear friend, you occupied a very flattering place in our conversations; we always paid you a tribute of warmest praise.

You are surprised that I went so much to the theatre; for you know I am not usually a frequenter of the play-house. From caprice, this winter, I absented myself from life in the *salons*; and in order that the friends, who rarely saw me at their houses, should not discover

me at the theatre, I usually selected a proscenium seat, in a corner where I could screen myself completely from the eyes of the public. These proscenium seats, at any time, are my favourite places. From them one sees everything that is enacted, not only on the stage but in the wings, in those wings where art ceases and lovely nature plays its part. When a pathetic tragedy is being performed on the stage before us, and when behind the wings one sees at the same time glimpses into the free and easy life of the comedians, this double aspect recalls to us the antique wall-pictures, or the frescoes in the Munich Glyptothek, and in many Italian palaces where, in the ornamented corners of the great historical pictures, humorous arabesques, Olympian jokes, Bacchanalian and Satyr-idylls are figured forth.

I frequented the Théâtre-Français very little. That house has for me somewhat of the mournfulness of the desert. There the spectres of the old tragedies reappear, with dagger and poisoned cup in their wan hands; and the air is full of the powder of classic perukes. It is most unbearable when these classic boards are at times yielded up to the mad play of modern Romanticism, or when, in order to satisfy the tastes of an old and a young public, a mixture of Classicism and Romanticism is compounded into a sort of tragic *juste-milieu*. These French tragic poets are emancipated slaves, who always carry one end of the classic chain about with them. A fine ear can easily distinguish a clanking at each of their steps, as in the days of the lordship of Agamemnon and of Talma.

I am far from rejecting the old French tragedy unreservedly. I respect Corneille, and I like Racine.

They have left masterpieces which will remain for ever on pedestals in the temple of art. For the theatre, their day is past. They have fulfilled their mission to a public of noble folk who loved to consider themselves the inheritors of antique heroism, or who at all events did not repulse this heroism with a petty bourgeois spirit. Under the Empire, the heroes of Corneille and Racine could still rely on the greatest sympathy when they played before the box of the great Emperor, or stalls filled with kings. Those days are past. The old aristocracy is dead; Napoleon is dead also; the throne is an ordinary arm-chair covered with red velvet; and to-day is the reign of the *bourgeoisie*, of the heroes of Paul de Kock and Eugène Scribe.

The hermaphrodite style and the anarchy of taste which is produced in the Théâtre-Française is detestable. Most of the innovators incline towards a naturalism which in high tragedy is as false as the bombastic imitation of classic pathos. You know all too well, dear Lewald, the naturalistic method after the manner of Iffland which once raged through Germany, and was routed from Weimar, chiefly by the influence of Goethe and Schiller. It is a similar naturalism which seeks to spread itself here, and its advocates rail against metrical form and measured diction. If this form were to consist only of the alexandrine, as it was delivered in the monotonous declamatory sing-song of the old period, these people would have reason on their side, and even prose and the flattest conversational tone would then be preferable for the stage. But in that case real tragedy would succumb, for it requires rhythmic language and a declamation distinct from mere conversational tones.

I would even exact these conditions for all kinds of dramatic works. It is necessary, at all events, that the stage should not be a banal repetition of life, but should show an ennobled existence, if not by rhythm and declamation, at least by the general tone, and by the innate solemnity of the drama. For the theatre is another world, as distinct from ours as the stage is from the stalls. Between the theatre and reality the orchestra is interposed, the music and the line of footlights. Reality, after having wandered athwart the empire of sound and of the footlights, reveals itself, purified and harmonised, to us in the theatre. The beautiful sounds of the music vibrate through it like a dying echo, and it is illuminated with the fairy-like reflections of the mysterious lights. They are magic chords and magic lights which, to a prosaic public, seem contrary to nature, and which, nevertheless, are more natural than ordinary nature, for it is nature exalted by art to a sublime divinity.

The foremost tragic poets among the French are still Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo. I name this one last because his activity, dramatically speaking, is neither so great nor so successful as that of his rival, in spite of the fact that he surpasses, in poetic value, all his contemporaries on this side of the Rhine. I certainly do not deny him the possession of dramatic talent, as do many people who, with perfidious intent, exalt his lyrical greatness. He is a poet, and has mastery over every form of poetry. His dramas are as worthy of praise as are his odes. But in the theatre rhetoric is more effective than poetry; and the reproaches which are cast at the poet when one of his pieces fails would more fittingly

apply to the mass of the public who are much less sensitive to the naïve accents of nature, to profound inventions, to psychological finesse, than to pompous phrases, coarse neighings of passion, and to the devices of the green-room—that is to say, what is here called in theatrical slang, *brûler les planches*.

Victor Hugo, especially in France, is not yet estimated at his full worth. German criticism and German impartiality render him a greater meed of appreciation and more independent praise. Here, not only does incompetent criticism, but also political party-spirit stand in the way of his recognition. The Carlists regard him as a renegade who hastened to chant the July revolution on his lyre, which still vibrated with the last chords of the consecration hymn of Charles X. The Republicans suspect his zeal for the popular cause, and detect in every phrase a secret predilection for the aristocracy and catholicism. Neither is he in favour with the invisible church of the Saint Simoniens, which is everywhere and nowhere, like the Christian Church before the days of Constantine. For these men regard art as sacerdotal, and demand that every work of the poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, shall witness to the sanctity of its high mission, that its aim is the well-being and beautifying of human nature. Now, Victor Hugo's works in nowise bear this moral impress; indeed, they sin completely against these generous but mistaken exigencies of the new doctrine. I call them mistaken, for, as you know, I uphold the autonomy of art, which must not be the servant of either religion or politics, but must, on the contrary, be an aim to itself, as the world itself. We recognise herein the same banale

objections that Goethe had to encounter from our pious ones; like him, Victor Hugo has to hear the inapt censure that he lacks enthusiasm for the ideal, that he is devoid of morals, that he is a callous egoist, etc. Then a false criticism pronounces his talent of giving a concrete form to a thought, which we praise as his highest quality, to be a fault, and asserts that his creations lack inherent poetry, *poésie intime*, that with him colour and contour are the essentials, that his poetry is wholly objective and material. In short, they blame him for his praiseworthy individuality, for his plastic sense.

And this injustice was dealt him, not by the older classical writers, who made war upon him with Aristotelian weapons only and are long since vanquished, but by his former colleagues, a fraction of the Romantic school, who have completely overthrown themselves together with their literary gonfalonieri. Almost all his old friends have forsaken him, and, to say the truth, have forsaken him through his own fault, wounded by that egotism which is very advantageous for the creation of a masterpiece, but very detrimental to social intercourse. Even Sainte-Beuve was not proof against it; even Sainte-Beuve, who was formerly the most faithful herald of his glory, blames him to-day. As in Africa, when the king of Darfur rides out in state, a panegyrist goes before him crying at the top of his voice, "Here comes the buffalo, the true descendant of a buffalo, the bull of bulls; all the others are oxen, this is the only true buffalo!" Thus Sainte-Beuve, each time that Victor Hugo stepped before the public with a new work, ran before him, blew the trumpet, and celebrated the buffalo of poetry. This is so

no longer. Sainte-Beuve now vaunts the ordinary calves and the distinguished cows of French literature; the friendly voice blames or is silent, and France's great poet will nevermore find fitting honour in his own country.

Yes, Victor Hugo is the greatest of poets in France, and, as many will say, he could even in Germany take a first rank among poets. Victor Hugo has imagination, creative power, intuition, and over and above this a lack of tact, which is never found with the French, but only with us. His mind is not harmonious; he abounds in efflorescences of bad taste, like Grabbe and Jean Paul. He has not the fine measure which we admire in the classical writers. His muse, in spite of its magnificence, is hampered with a certain German awkwardness. I might say of his muse what is said of beautiful Englishwomen: she has two left hands.

Alexandre Dumas is not so great a poet, but he possesses qualities wherewith he can excel as a dramatist much better than Victor Hugo. He possesses that uncompromising expression of passion which the French call *verve*, and in many respects he is more French than Hugo. He sympathises with all virtues, with all vices, with all the wants, with the perpetual restlessness of his countrymen. He is enthusiastic, fiery, a born comedian, generous, frivolous, a braggart, a true son of France, that Gascony of Europe. He speaks from the heart to the heart, is understood, and applauded. His head is an hostelry that is oftentimes frequented by good thoughts, which, however, never pass more than one night therein; very often it remains empty. No one has such dramatic talent as Dumas. The theatre is his proper sphere. He is a born stage-poet, and all dramatic

material belongs to him by right, whether he find it in Schiller, Shakespeare, or Calderon. He extracts new effects therefrom, and melts the old coins, in order to stamp them afresh with the impress of the day's currency. He should certainly be thanked for his thefts from the past, since he therewith enriches the present. An unjust critic, in an article which appeared a long time ago in the *Journal des Débats* in the midst of deplorable circumstances, did the poor poet much harm with the ignorant crowd, by pointing out the striking parallelisms between many scenes in his pieces and in those of foreign tragedies. Nothing is more unjust than this reproach of plagiarism. In art there exists no sixth commandment; the poet may take material for his work wherever he can find it; he may appropriate whole columns with their sculptured capitals, providing that the temple for whose support he destines them be magnificent. Goethe understood this well, and even Shakespeare before him. Nothing is more foolish than to demand from the poet that he shall create his own stuff out of himself; that would be originality. It reminds me of a fable in which the spider speaks to the bee. The spider reproached the bee for gathering the sweetness of a thousand flowers wherewith to make its wax and its honey; "while I," she triumphantly added, "draw my whole art-tissue out of myself in original threads."

As I said, the article against Dumas in the *Journal des Débats* appeared to light under deplorable circumstances. It was the production of one of those young scribblers, written in blind obedience to the commands of Victor Hugo, and it was printed in a paper whose editors are on the most friendly terms with him. Hugo was generous

enough not to deny his privity to the appearance of this article, and he believed that, as is customary with literary friendships, he had given his old friend Dumas the death-stroke at the appropriate moment. As a matter of fact, a lugubrious crape veil has since then shrouded Dumas' reputation, and many people opine that if this veil were raised, nothing would be found behind it. But since the representation of such a drama as *Edmund Kean*, Dumas' reputation has been reinstated in all its glory, for he has therewith given fresh evidence of his great dramatic talent.

This piece, which is certainly made to succeed likewise on a German stage, is conceived and executed with a vivacity which I have never seen equalled. There is a spontaneity, a newness of means, evolved as it were out of himself, a plot whose complications grow naturally one out of the other, a sentiment which speaks direct from heart to heart; in short, a creation. Dumas may be reproached for sundry little faults against external accessories of costume and locality, but the whole picture is, nevertheless, a striking reality. He carried me in memory back again to old England, and I thought I saw before me the late Edmund Kean, whom there I saw so often. This illusion was in no doubt in great part produced by the actor who played the principal rôle, notwithstanding that the imposing figure of Frederic Lemaître differs greatly from the small, undersized figure of Kean. But the latter had, however, something in his personality and in his acting which I find again in Frederic Lemaître. There is a remarkable affinity between the two men. Kean was one of those exceptional natures who, by means of a certain rapidity of movement, of a

strange tone of voice, and of still stranger use of his eyes, interpreted and rendered, not the ordinary everyday sentiments, but all that the heart of man can contain of the unusual, the bizarre, the extraordinary. It is the same with Frederic Lemaître. He is one of those terrible *farceurs* before whom Thalia pales with fright, and Melpomene smiles with joy. Kean was one of those men whose characters defy all the frictions of civilisation, and who are made, I will not say of better, but of quite other stuff than we are; genuine originals with one faculty, but with this unique, extraordinary faculty dominating all their surroundings, full of an illimitable power that is undefined and ignored by themselves, an infernally divine power that we call *das dæmonische*. This *dæmonische* is to be found to a more or less degree in the words or actions of all great men. Kean was not a many-sided actor. It is true that he could play a great many different characters, but in these characters it was always his own that he reproduced. But in them he always presented striking truths to us. Although ten years have passed since I saw him, he is always present in my memory in the rôles of Shylock, Othello, Richard, and Macbeth. Many obscure passages in these dramas of Shakespeare have been completely elucidated to me by the wonderful power of his personification. He had a range of modulation in his voice which revealed a whole existence of terror; in his eyes, lightnings which illumined the sombre depths of a titanic soul; and in the movements of hands, head, feet, an impulsiveness which said more than could a commentary in four volumes by Franz Horn.

VII.

As you know, dear friend, it is not my wont to give facile, verbose discourses upon the play of comedians, or, as people say, on the *manifestation of the artist*. But Edmund Kean, of whom I spoke in my last letter, and to whom I again refer, was no vulgar stage-hero: and, I confess it to you, I did not disdain, after a criticism in my English journal upon the important parliamentary speeches of the day, to jot down my fugitive impressions of each of Kean's representations. Unfortunately, this journal has been lost, together with many of my most valuable papers. It seems to me, however, that at Wandsbeck I read to you something upon Kean's acting of Shylock. The Jew of Venice was the first of those heroic parts which I saw him play. I say heroic, for his conception was not that of an old broken-down man, a kind of Schewa of hatred, as our Devrient represented him, but of a hero. I think I see him still, clad in his black silk, sleeveless requelaur, which reached only to his knees, so that the blood-red undergarments that fell to his feet appeared in sharper contrast. A black, broad-brimmed felt hat, turned up at both sides, with a blood-red ribbon round the high crown, covered his head, whose hair, as well as his beard, hung in long black locks, and formed a striking frame to the healthy red face, wherein two white strained eyes rolled with terribly unquiet looks. In his right hand he held a stick, which was less a support than a weapon. He leans the elbow of his left arm on it, and on his left

hand rests his black head, full of blacker thoughts, in traitorous meditation, while he explains to Bassano what is meant till the present day by the expression "an honest man." When he relates the parable of the patriarch Jacob and of Laban's sheep, he feels himself enmeshed in his own words, and cries out suddenly, "Ay, he was the third," and during a long pause in which he seems to reflect upon what he shall say, one can see how the story adjusts itself little by little in his head. Then he continues suddenly, as though he had found the thread of the narrative, "No, not take interest . . .," one seems to hear, not a part learned by heart, but a painfully improvised speech. At the end of his narration, he, like an author, smiles contentedly over his invention. He begins slowly, "Signor Antonio, many a time and oft . . ." till he comes to the word "dog," with which he begins to emphasise more strongly. His anger grows with the words, "And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine . . ." till "own." Then he steps nearer, erect and proud, and speaks with bitter irony, "Well, then . . ." as far as "ducats——." But suddenly he bends his neck, takes off his hat, and adds with servile gestures, "Or shall I bend low . . . monies." Yes, his voice becomes servile at this moment; only the slightest touch of concentrated anger can be discerned; round his complacent lips little serpents writhe rapidly; his eyes only cannot restrain themselves, and dart their poisoned glances continuously. This discord of external humility and secret scorn breaks with the last word "monies" into an awful, prolonged laugh which ends suddenly; while the face, convulsively contracted with humility, preserves for a few seconds longer

the immobility of a mask, and the eye only—that evil eye—gleams with deadly brilliancy.

But words are useless. The best description cannot give an idea of Edmund Kean's manner. His declamation, his abrupt delivery, has been imitated by many comedians. For the parrot can counterfeit with illusory effect the cry of the eagle, the king of the air; but the eagle's glance, that piercing fire which can look into the kindred light of the sun, Kean's eye, that magic lightning, that wizard flame, no ordinary theatre-bird can simulate it. Only the eye of Frederic Lemaître possesses it; and indeed, when he represented Kean, I saw something that was akin to the look of the veritable Kean of Drury Lane.

It would be unjust if, after such laudatory mention of Frederic Lemaître, I were to pass over in silence the other great actor that Paris possesses. Bocage enjoys here a reputation as great; his personality, if not as remarkable, is certainly as interesting as that of his colleague. Bocage is a handsome, distinguished-looking man, of noble manners and movements. His metallic, richly-inflected voice lends itself equally well to the thunders of anger and scorn, and to the most caressing tenderness of love-whispers. In the wildest outbreak of passion he always preserves the grace and dignity of art, and disdains to experiment with raw nature, as does Frederic Lemaître, who by this means obtains startling effects, but effects devoid of poetic beauty. His is an exceptional nature which dominates by its demoniac power less than he himself is dominated by it, and that is why I have compared him to Kean. Bocage does not differ from other

men in organic construction ; he is distinguished from them by a greater fineness of organisation. He is not a bastard compound of Ariel and Kaliban ; he is a harmonious being, a beautiful, erect figure like Phœbus Apollo. His eye has less power, but with the movements of his head he can produce immense effects, especially when he disdainfully throws his head backward. He has cold, ironical sighs, which pierce the soul like steel scythes. He has tears in his voice, and accents of profound sadness, so that one could think he bled internally. If he suddenly covers his eyes with both his hands, one imagines one hears Death saying, "Let it be night !" When he smiles again, smiles with all his sweet magic, it is as though the sun rose on his lips.

Since chance leads me to criticise the stage, I shall permit myself to address a few observations to you upon the difference of declamation in the three kingdoms of the civilised world—in England, France, and Germany.

The first time that I was present at the representation of an English tragedy I was especially struck with a gesticulation which bore a great resemblance to that of a pantomime. It did not appear to me to be contrary to nature, but rather an exaggeration of nature. It was long ere I could accustom myself thereto and, in spite of this caricatured delivery, enjoy properly one of Shakespeare's plays on English soil. The cries also, the piercing cries which the men as well as the women uttered in playing their parts, were unendurable to me at first. Are these cries necessary in the large English playhouses, in order that the words be not lost in the vast space ? Is the forced gesticulation also a local

necessity, on account of the majority of the spectators being seated so far away from the stage? I do not know. The play in the English theatre is perhaps regulated by a right of custom; and to this circumstance may be ascribed the exaggeration which surprised me especially in the case of the actresses, whose delicate organs, rising to highest pitch, not unfrequently fall back into corresponding dissonances, and they make gestures like dromedaries in order to express their maiden passions. The circumstance that the women's *rôles* were formerly played by men may possibly still have an influence on the actresses of to-day, who continue to shriek their parts in accordance with old theatrical traditions.

However great the inherent faults of English declamation may be, it is amply compensated for by the genuine sincerity and naïveness which it frequently demonstrates. These qualities are due to the language of the country, which is, more properly speaking, a dialect, and possesses all the virtues of a language that has been directly evolved by the people. The French language is rather more than the product of society, and lacks that inherent sincerity and *naïveté* which are only produced by a language sprung from the heart of the people and imbued with its pure blood. For the same reason, however, French declamation possesses a grace and a fluency which is wholly strange and indeed impossible to English declamation. In France, the language has been so thoroughly filtered during the three hundred years of chattering social life, that it has irrevocably lost all vulgarity of expressions, obscure locutions, all commonness, and lack of concision; but also all that savour, those

salutary virtues, all that mysterious magic which runs and ripples through uncultured words. French language and French declamation, like the people themselves, are adjusted only to the needs of the day, to the present. The misty regions of recollection and of presentiment are closed to this language; it thrives in the light of the sun, whence it draws its clarity and its warmth. Night, with its pale moonlight, its mysterious stars, its sweet dreams and terrifying spectres, is foreign and dreary to it.

As to the actual play of French actors, in this particular they surpass their *confrères* in all lands; and, indeed, for the natural reason that all Frenchmen are born comedians. They know so well how to learn their parts in every situation in life, and to drape themselves to such advantage, that it is a pleasure to see them. The French are the court comedians of the good God *les comédiens ordinaires du bon Dieu*, a chosen troupe: the whole history of France appears to me at times like a great comedy, represented for the delectation of humanity. In life, as in literature and in the plastic arts, the theatrical element dominates in the French character.

With regard to us Germans, we are honest people and good citizens. What nature has denied us we obtain by dint of study. It sometimes happens that when we roar too loud we fear that we may frighten the occupants of the boxes and be punished. Therefore we insinuate with a certain slyness that we are not real lions, but only mummers sewn into lions' skins; this insinuation we call irony. We are honest people, and we play best the parts of honest people. Quinquagenarian State-officials, old employés, loyal master-foresters, and faithful servants

are our admiration. Heroes cost us much trouble ; nevertheless, we represent them fairly successfully, especially in garrison towns, where we find good models. Nor are we happier with kings. In princely residences respect prevents us from playing the part of a king with perfect freedom. It might be taken amiss ; so we are careful to wear the miserable smock of submissive humility under the ermine. In the German Free States of Hamburg, Lubeck, Bremen, and Frankfurt, in these glorious republics actors can play the part of kings with impunity. But patriotism incites them to abuse the stage for political ends, and they purposely act the king so badly that they make royalty ridiculous, if not hateful. They indirectly incline the minds of the spectators towards republicanism : this is especially the case in Hamburg, where the kings are represented in the most miserable manner. If the very wise senate of that town were not ungrateful, as have been all Republican governments—Athens, Rome, Florence—the Republic of Hamburg ought to erect, to the memory of its actors, a great Pantheon with the inscription, “To the bad comedians ; a grateful Fatherland !”

Do you, dear Lewald, remember Schwartz of blessed memory, who played King Philip in *Don Carlos*, and who always slowly drawled his words out earthwards, and then suddenly jerked them heavenwards in such a manner that several seconds elapsed before they could reach us ?

But, not to be unjust, we must admit that it is the fault of the German language if the delivery is worse on our stage than on that of England or of France. The language of the first is a dialect, that of the second is a

social product; ours is neither the one nor the other, and is as lacking in inherent *naïveté* as in fluent grace. It is merely a language of books, a crude fabrication of our writers which we obtain from the Leipzig fair, by means of the booksellers' trade. The declamation of the English is the exaggeration of nature; ours is unnatural. The declamation of the French is the affected tone of tirade; ours is a lie. There is a traditional whining on our stage which, for me, has often spoilt the finest plays of Schiller, especially in sentimental passages where our actresses break into a maudlin prattle. However, I must not say anything unkind of the German actresses, for they are my compatriots; moreover, it was the geese who saved the Capitol, and, besides, there are many well-ordered women among them, and finally . . . I am interrupted by the infernal row that is going on in the cemetery beneath my windows.

. . . The old Adam, or, more properly, the old Cain, awoke in the boys who, a little ago, were capering so contentedly round the big tree, and they began to wrangle with one another. To re-establish order I was forced to go out to them, and it was with difficulty that I could appease them with words. One little fellow was hitting a still smaller on the back with especial fury. When I asked him, "What has the poor child done?" he looked at me with big eyes, and stuttered, "Well, he's my brother."

Nor does eternal peace reign in my house to-day. I heard an uproar in the corridor, a little ago, as though an ode of Klopstock had fallen from the top of the staircase. The landlord and landlady were quarrelling, and the wife reproached the poor man for being a squanderer, for

wasting her dowry, and vowed she would die of grief. It is true that she is ill already, but from avarice. Every bite that the husband puts in his mouth makes the wife ill, and if he takes medicine and leaves a little in the bottle, she takes care to swallow the remainder, so that nothing may be lost of such costly stuff, and thus she makes herself ill. The poor man, a tailor by trade and a German by condition, has retired from the town in order to pass the rest of his days in the peace of the country. But he will assuredly only find peace by the grave of his wife. This is perhaps why he has bought a house so near to the churchyard, whence he so wistfully contemplates the resting-place of the departed. His only pleasure consists in tobacco and roses, and of the latter he knows how to cultivate the most beautiful varieties. He has this morning put some pots of roses in full bloom in the plot before my window. But, dear Lewald, ask your wife why these roses have no scent. Either these roses have caught cold or I have.

VIII.

IN my last letter I spoke of the two chiefs of the French drama. Nevertheless, the names which flourished best on the theatres of the boulevards this winter were neither Victor Hugo nor Dumas.

Three names, hitherto unknown to literature, have been constantly in the mouths of the people. They are Mallefile, Rougemont, and Bouchardy. I hope much from the first, who, in my opinion, has poetic talents. You may perhaps remember his *Seven Children of*

Lara, that ghastly piece that we once saw together at the Porte-Saint-Martin. In the middle of all the chaos of blood and wrath scenes occasionally appear that are really beautiful, and attest to a romantic imagination and dramatic talent. Another of Mallefile's tragedies, *Glenaroon*, is of greater importance, because it is less confused and obscure, and it contains one beautiful and strikingly grandiose situation. In both pieces the part of an adulterous mother is played to perfection by Mademoiselle Georges, that great sun of flesh that irradiates the theatrical heaven of the boulevards. A few months ago Mallefile produced a new piece entitled *Le Pay-san des Alpes*. This time he has restrained himself to a greater simplicity, but at the cost of the poetry. This tragedy is feebler than its predecessors; but in it also the barriers of marriage are swept away in a very pathetic manner.

The second laureate of the boulevards, Rougemont, has made his reputation with three pieces, which appeared one after the other in the short space of six months with great success. The first is called *La Duchesse de Lavaubalière*, a feeble plot, but with a great deal of action whose developments are neither strikingly audacious nor natural, but wearisome through petty calculations; and the passion displayed therein is of only simulated warmth and is in reality cold and flat. The second piece, entitled *Leon*, is already better; it contains one or two good touching scenes. Last week I saw his third piece, *Eulalie Granger*, a purely bourgeois drama but excellent, inasmuch as the author has been obedient to the nature of his talent, and has presented in a beautifully framed picture, with great

rectitude of judgment, the lamentable entanglements of present society.

Only one piece by Bouchardy, the third laureate, has as yet been produced, but it has been crowned with exceptional success. It is called *Gaspardo*. It has been played every day for five months, and if this continues it will run for some hundred representations. Honestly speaking, my judgment is silent when I think of the causes of this colossal vogue. The piece is mediocre where not actually bad, full of action, with incidents that follow hard on one another's heels, so that one effect breaks the neck of that which follows. The thought that directs all this confusion is narrow, and not one situation, not one character, is developed naturally. This conglomeration of material is unendurable enough in the above-mentioned stage-poets; but the author of *Gaspardo* has surpassed both. On this head, I am assured by certain young dramaturges, that it is intentional, that it is done on principle, for it is by this piecing together of heterogeneous things, this forced reunion of epochs and localities, the romantic poet of to-day is distinguished from the previous classicists who preserved the drama within the strictly closed barriers of the triple unity of time, place, and action.

Have these innovators really enlarged the limits of the French theatre? I do not know. But these dramatic authors always remind me of the gaoler who complained of the smallness of the prison, and could not find any better method of enlarging it than by stuffing it fuller and fuller of prisoners, who, however, instead of enlarging the prison walls, merely pressed one another to death.

I wish, moreover, to point out that in *Gaspardo* and in *Eulalie Granger*, as in all the dionysiac boulevard plays, marriage is made a scapegoat and a laughing-stock.

I would much like to speak to you, dear friend, concerning one or two others of the boulevard dramatic writers; but when from time to time they produce a passable piece they give evidence therein of the mere facility of hand common to all the French, but no originality of conception. And, besides, I have only seen and immediately forgotten the pieces, without even informing myself of the name of the authors. In reparation, I will tell you the names of the eunuchs who served as chamberlains to King Ahasuerus in Lusa: they were Mehuman, Bistha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Sethar, and Charkas.

The theatres of the boulevard of which I have just spoken, and I have continually in mind in these letters, are veritable theatres of the people. They begin at Porte-Saint-Martin and stretch in a line along the Boulevard du Temple in ever-decreasing order of value. And, indeed, this local order of rank is in exact relation to their order of merit. First comes the theatre which bears the name of Porte-Saint-Martin. It is the best in Paris for the drama; excellent representations are given there of the dramas of Victor Hugo and Dumas, by an excellent troupe, which includes Mademoiselle Georges and Bocage among others. Next comes L'Ambigu-Comique, where the pieces and the actors are already less good, but where romantic dramas are also played. Thence we reach Franconi, whose stage cannot be placed in the same rank, for the pieces given there are more fit for horses than for

men. Thereafter comes *La Gaîté*, a theatre that was once burnt down, but has been recently rebuilt, with an interior and exterior which justify the name. The romantic drama has citizenship here also, and in this comfortable house tears flow at times and hearts beat with terrible emotion; nevertheless, song and laughter predominate here, and the *vaudeville*, with its light trilling, comes to the fore. The same is the case with the neighbouring theatre, *Les Folies-dramatiques*, which gives dramas, and also *vaudevilles* in greater number. This theatre cannot be pronounced bad; I have seen some good pieces well performed there. Lower than the *Folies-dramatiques* in position as in merit is that theatre of *Madame Sagni's*, where dramas of very mediocre quality are played, and the most miserable buffooneries which degenerate in the neighbouring *Funambules* into the coarsest of farces. Behind this *Funambules*, where one of the most perfect *Pierrots*, the famous *Debureau*, performs his powdered-face antics, I discovered a quite small theatre, which is called *Lazary*, where the playing is quite bad, where badness reaches its utmost limits, and the art of the stage is wholly ignored.

A new theatre has been erected since your departure from Paris, quite at the extremity of the boulevards, near the Bastille; it is called the theatre of the *Porte-Saint-Antoine*. It is in every respect out of the line; and its artistic and local position does not permit of its being ranked among the theatres of the boulevard that I have just mentioned. Moreover, it is too new to have the exact measure of its worth pronounced. The pieces which have been given there are, at all events, not bad. I saw recently, in this neighbourhood of the Bastille, a

drama which bore the name of the prison, and which had one or two profoundly touching scenes. The heroine, it is hardly necessary to say, is the wife of the governor of the Bastille, and elopes with a State-prisoner. I have also seen a good comedy there, entitled *Mariez vous donc*, which had for subject the conjugal misfortunes of a man who would not make a *mariage de convenance* in good society, and had married a beautiful girl of the people. A cousin becomes her lover, with both of whom the mother-in-law conspires in domestic opposition against the husband, and they reduce the poor man to miserable straits through their luxury and disorder. Finally, in order to gain a livelihood for his family, the luckless man is reduced to open a dancing-hall for the rabble at the *barrière*. When a quadrille is incomplete he makes his little seven-year-old son take a part, and the child knows already how to vary his steps with the dissolute pantomime of the *chahut*. At this point a friend finds him, and the poor man, violin in hand, while fiddling and springing and calling out the figures, seizes the occasional pauses wherein to recount his conjugal misfortunes to the new-comer. Nothing could be more mournful than the contrast between this tale and the occupation of the teller, often obliged to cut his words short with a "*Chassez,*" or an "*Avant deux !*" The dance music, which, after the manner of melodrama, serves as an accompaniment to his matrimonial story, and these merry sounds cut one to the heart with their gruesome irony. I could not join in the laughter of the spectators. I could only laugh at the appearance of the father-in-law, an old toper, who has drunk all his goods and chattels, and has finally to resort to begging.

But he begs in the most humorous manner. He is a fat good-for-nothing, with a red mottled face. He leads a blind dog, which he calls his Belisarius, by a string. He asserts that men are ungrateful to dogs, who so often act as faithful leaders of the blind; but he, for his part, wishes to repay this philanthropic debt to animals, and for this reason he now acts as leader to his poor blind dog, his Belisarius.

I laughed so heartily that my neighbours certainly must have taken me for the theatre *chatouilleur*.

Do you know what a *chatouilleur* is? It is only recently that I have learned the meaning of this word. I owe the enlightenment to my barber, whose brother has the post of *chatouilleur* at one of the boulevards theatres. He is paid in order that, at each representation of a comedy he shall laugh at each good point, and laugh loud enough to excite contagious laughter among the public. For it frequently happens that the jokes are very bad, and the public would not laugh outright if the *chatouilleur* had not the art, through the manifold modulations of his laughter, from the slightest snigger to the heartiest guffaw, to incite the laughter of the crowd. Laughter has an epidemic character like yawning, and I recommend you the importation of the *chatouilleur* as a "fore-laughter" for the German stage. Fore-yawners you already have in ample number. But it is no easy matter to fulfil this office; and, as my barber assures me, a considerable amount of talent is required therefor. His brother has practised it now for fifteen years, and has developed into such a *virtuoso*, that it suffices for him to give one of his fine half-choked falsetto sounds in order to set the whole

assembly into shouts of laughter. "He is a man of talent," added my barber, "and he earns more money than I do, for he serves also in the capacity of funeral mourner in *pompes funèbres*. He has often five or six funerals in a morning. He looks so dejected in his raven black garments, with his white handkerchief and distressed face, that one would swear he was following the coffin of his own father."

Of a truth, dear Lewald, I have great respect for this many-sidedness ; nevertheless, were I as qualified I would not, for all the money in the world, fulfil the functions of this man. Only think how horrible it must be on a lovely morning in spring, when you have leisurely enjoyed your coffee, and the sun laughs straight into your heart, to have to put on a long funereal face, and to conjure up tears for some defunct grocer whom you have probably never known, and whose death can be only a satisfaction to you, because it brings in to the mute seven francs, ten sous. And then when you have returned for the sixth time from the cemetery, deadly tired, utterly depressed and morose, to have to laugh the whole evening over all those bad points, over which you have laughed so often, laugh with the whole face, with every muscle, with every convulsion of body and soul, in order to stimulate a *blasé* audience to laughter . . . it is terrible ! I would rather be king of France !

GEORGE SAND.

PARIS, 30th April 1840.

YESTERDAY evening, after a protracted waiting from day to day, after a delay of nearly two months whereby the curiosity, and also the patience, of the public had been overstrained—at length yesterday evening *Cosima*, George Sand's drama, was performed in the Théâtre Français. The crush and the heat were awful. You have no conception how, during the past few weeks, all the notabilities of the capital, all soever who are prominent by reason of rank, birth, talent, vice, riches—in short, by distinction of any sort—spared no trouble in order to assist at this performance. The fame of the author is so great that curiosity was screwed to the highest pitch. Not only curiosity but quite other interests and emotions came also into play. It was widely known beforehand that cabals, intrigues, and malevolence had made common cause with the meanest professional jealousies to conspire against the piece. The daring author, who through her romances had already excited the greatest disapprobation alike of the aristocracy and *bourgeoisie*, ought to take the occasion of a dramatic *début* to do public penance for her “irreligious and immoral principles.” For, as I wrote to you to-day, the French *noblesse* cherish religion as a safeguard against the threatening terrors of

Republicanism, and protect it in order to further their interests and to shield their heads ; while the *bourgeoisie* see their heads threatened on account of George Sand's anti-matrimonial doctrines, threatened, namely, with the ornamentation of a certain pair of horns, which a married burgher-guardsman as willingly dispenses with, as he eagerly wishes to be decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

The author has realised clearly her equivocal position. She has, in her play, avoided all that could provoke to anger the noble knights of religion, the burgher-shieldbearers of morality, the legitimists of politics and of marriage. The champion of social revolution, who intrepidly ventures all things in her other writings, confines herself within the narrowest limits on the stage : her immediate aim being not to proclaim her principles in the theatre, but to take possession of the theatre. That she may succeed in this excites, however, the greatest alarm among certain small people who are quite unaware of these religious, political, and moral differences, and who acquaint themselves with only the most ordinary professional interests. These are the so-called stage-poets, who, in France as with us in Germany, form a class apart, and have nothing in common with either the genuine literary men or the celebrated writers whom the nation honours. These men, with few exceptions, attach themselves exclusively to the theatre. With us the great writers wilfully turn away from the stage-world with marked contempt ; whereas, here in France, they would dearly like to produce for it, but are driven off the ground by the machinations of the above-named stage-poets. And, after all, one cannot grudge it to

these little people that they defend themselves against the invasion of the great ones. "What do you want with us?" they cry; "remain in your literature, and do not meddle with our flesh-pots! For you the glory, for us the money! For you the long articles of admiration, the recognition of fine minds, of high critics, who wholly ignore us, poor beggars! For you the fumes of poetry, for us the foam of champagne, which we joyfully swallow in company with the chief *claqueur* and the foremost ladies. We eat, drink, are applauded, hissed, and are forgotten, while they in their Reviews of 'Two Worlds' are lauded, and satiated with sublime immortality!"

Indeed, the theatre affords those stage-poets the most glittering prosperity. The most of them become rich, live in comfort and plenty; instead of which, the great writers in France, ruined by the Belgian piracies and the bankrupt condition of the booksellers, starve in lamentable penury. What more natural than that they should sometimes hanker after the golden fruits, which ripen behind the lamps of the stage-world, and stretch a hand thereto, as did Balzac recently, to whom this lust brought evil consequences. There exists already in Germany a defensive and offensive alliance among the mediocrity who own the theatre; and this also is the case to a much worse degree in Paris, where all these miseries are centralised. In addition to this, the little people here are very active, very clever, and very persistent in their war against the great, and more especially in their war against genius, which stands ever isolated and is also somewhat inept, and, be it said in confidence, somewhat dreamily inactive. Now, what sort of reception has

been meted out to this drama of George Sands, the greatest author that new France has produced, that *outré* lonely genius, which has been appreciated by us also in Germany? Was the reception decidedly bad, or doubtfully good? Honestly speaking, I cannot answer these questions. Respect for a great name has perhaps paralysed evil intentions. I anticipated the worst. All the enemies of the author formed a *rendez-vous* in the immense hall of the Théâtre Français, which holds over two thousand persons. The administration had placed a hundred and forty tickets at the disposal of the author, for her to bestow upon her friends. Distributed, however, by womanly caprice, very few, I think, fell into the right, applauding hands. There was no question of an organised *claque*; the usual head thereof tendered his services, but gained no hearing from the proud author of *Lelia*. The so-called Romans, who, seated in the *parterre* beneath the great light, are wont to applaud so lustily when a piece by Scribe or Ancelot is produced, were yesterday nowhere to be seen in the Théâtre Français. The applause, which was nevertheless emphatic and sufficiently loud, was therefore all the more honourable. During the fifth act a few miauling sounds were heard, and yet this act contained far more dramatic and poetical beauties than the preceding acts, in which the effort to avoid everything that might give offence produced an almost unpleasant restraint.

Concerning the merits of the piece I will not here offer an opinion. Enough that the author is George Sand, and that the printed work will in a few days be handed over to the critics of all Europe. This is an advantage which

great reputations enjoy. They are judged by a jury, which does not allow itself to be led away by a few literary eunuchs who make their piping voices audible from the corner of a *parterre* or of a daily paper.

Concerning the performance of this much-debated drama, I have, alas, only the worst to report. With the exception of the celebrated Dorval, who, yesterday, played neither worse nor better than usual, the whole cast gave evidence of their monotonous mediocrity. The hero of the piece, a Monsieur Beauvallet, played, to speak biblically, "like a swine with a golden nose-ring." George Sand seems to have foreseen how little her drama, in spite of all concessions made to the caprices of the actors, had to expect from the mimetic performance of the same; and in a conversation with a German friend she said jestingly, "You see, the French are all born comedians, and each plays his part in the world more or less brilliantly; those, however, among my country people who possess the least talent for the noble art of acting, devote themselves to the theatre and become actors."

I had myself previously observed how the public life here, the representative system and the political life, absorb all the mimetic talent in France, and that therefore only mediocre talent is to be found in the theatre proper. This applies exclusively to the men, however, and not to the women. The French stage is rich in actresses of the highest distinction, and the present generation perhaps surpasses the previous. We admire great, extraordinary talents, which develop here in such numbers, since women, by reason of unjust laws and the usurpation of men, are shut out from all political offices

and honours, and are therefore debarred from an advantageous exercise of their abilities on the boards of the Bourbon and Luxembourg palaces. The only outlets for their desire for public life are in the houses of art and of gallantry, and they become either actresses or *demi-mondaines*, or both at the same time. . . . Montesquieu has somewhere in his *Esprit des lois* endeavoured to characterise the nature of despotism by comparing despots with those savages who, when they wish to enjoy the fruit of a tree, immediately seize their axe and fell the tree itself, and then seat themselves comfortably against the trunk and eat up the fruit with eager haste. I would like to apply this comparison to the above-mentioned ladies. After Shakespeare, in whose Cleopatra—who I have once named *une Reine entretenue*—is delineated a masterly example of such women's forms, our friend Honoré de Balzac is certainly the writer who has drawn them with greatest fidelity. He describes them as a naturalist describes a species of animals, or a pathologist diagnoses an illness, without any moralising aim, without predilection, and without aversion. It has certainly never occurred to him to embellish or even to rehabilitate such phenomena which art and morality alike prohibits.

I should have liked to point out that the procedure of his colleague George Sand is quite different, that she has a definite intention in view, which she pursues in all her works. I wish also to observe that I do not approve of this intention—only it occurs to me that such observations would be very inopportune at a moment when all the enemies of the author of *Lelia* make common cause against her at the Théâtre-Français. But what

the devil do they want in this affair? Do they not know that a pipe can be bought for a sou, that the veriest blockhead is a *virtuoso* on this instrument? We have seen people who could pipe as though they were Paganinis. . . .

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